

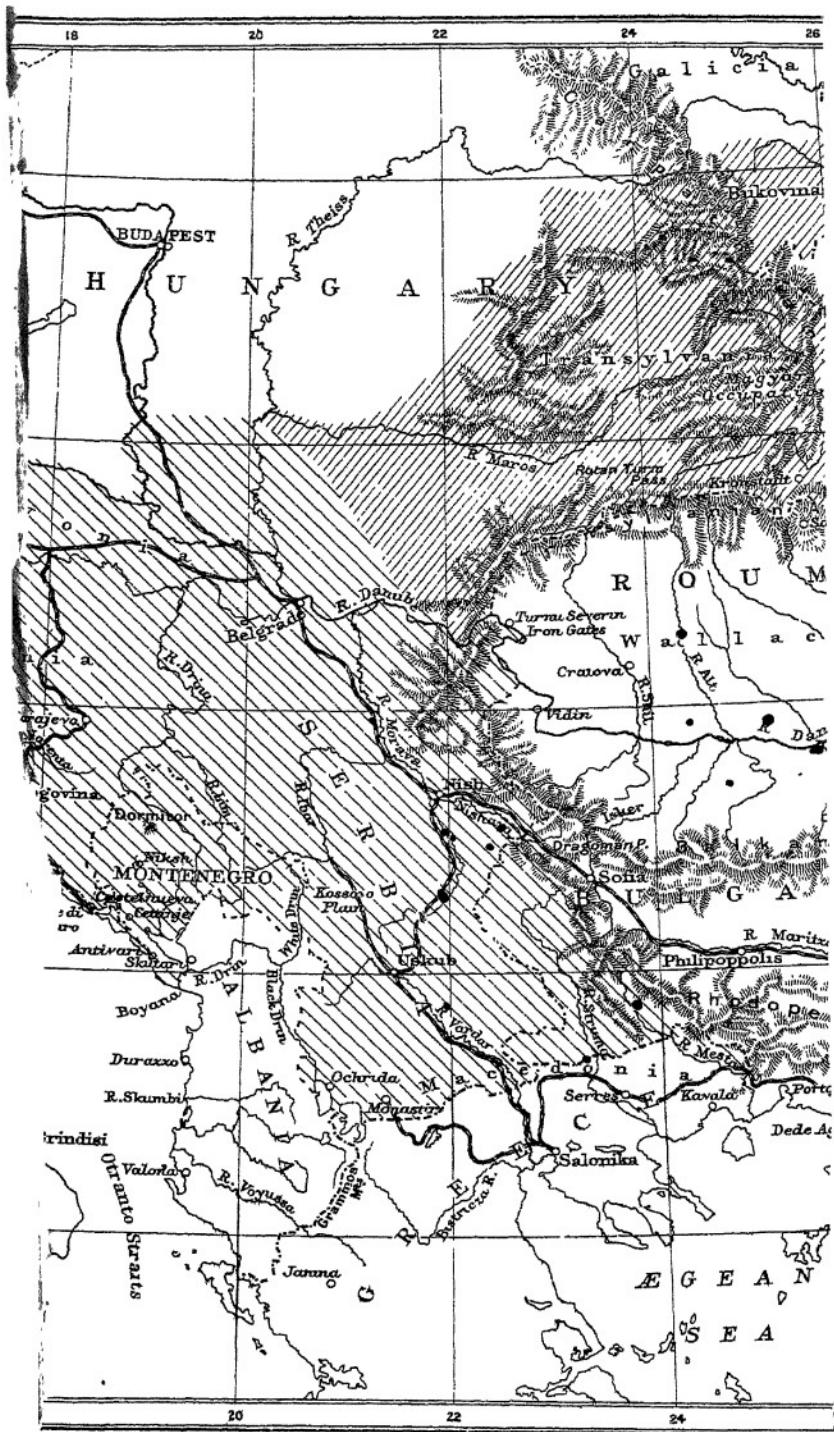
BOUNDARIES IN EUROPE AND THE
NEAR EAST



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BOUNDARIES IN EUROPE AND THE NEAR EAST

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INTRODUCTION

THIS book contains a series of lectures delivered to the teachers of the London County Council during the winter, some of which have already appeared as articles in popular magazines. It is therefore but an attempt to explain in the simplest possible language those geographical relations which exist between certain states in Europe and the Near East which may affect complicated questions of reconstruction hereafter. There is probably not a nationality between Central Europe and Persia which will occupy exactly the same space after the War as it did before. Each, individually, hopes for extension or readjustment of territory ; new boundaries will have to be demarcated, and great international obligations and agreements will arise. Accepting, then, what is known of the national aspirations and future prospects of each state, I have endeavoured to show how far such aspirations are justified from the geographical point of view by the effect of a change in their present environment, and what future territorial readjustment may be effective in the interests of security and peace. In the outlining of new boundaries I have, as far as present information permits, based my views

ciples which govern the motive of these lectures. Geographical conditions, equally with the aspirations of the peoples, remain the same. The day of deliverance has, we hope, only been postponed.

In compiling the notes on which these lectures are based I have been indebted chiefly to the admirable series of maps on the scale of one-millionth which are now being published by the Royal Geographical Society, and the material which is to be found in recent numbers of that Society's journal. In addition the *New Europe Magazine* has given me many valuable hints, whilst Balkan material has been furnished by the following works: *Rumania Past and Present*, by Samuelson; *The Balkans*, of the "Stories of the Nations" Series, by William Miller; *Rumania in 1900*, by Benger; *Bulgaria*, by Frank Fox; *Rumania and the Great War*, by Seton-Watson; and *Geographical Aspects of the Balkan Problem*, by Miss Newbigin. There have been many articles in current magazine literature too numerous to mention. In fact, new and interesting information is to be acquired daily, just as new and interesting phases of world history are evolved from week to week. It takes a bold man to prophesy nowadays. I have not that courage, and I leave it to my readers to form their own conclusions.

CHAPTER I

THE NEAR EAST

THERE will surely come a time (and we may hope that it is not a far distant time) when the geographical significance of the Near and Middle East as a widespread link between the West and the Farther East will prove to be an important factor in world politics : when those topographical conformations, which through all history have influenced the destinies of European nations, will be taken into account in schemes of redistribution of territory in the interests of world-wide peace. Public interest at present lies chiefly with those provinces and nationalities which intervene between Germany and the realization of her ambitious Pan-German aspirations. Italy, Poland,

Page 53, line 15. Read 'the sources of' for 'junction with.'

- „ 104, „ 21. „ ‘Carol’ for ‘Carlos.’
- „ 104, „ 29. „ ‘nephew’ for ‘son.’
- „ 109, „ 20. „ ‘Sereth’ for ‘Danube.’
- „ 111, „ 2. „ ‘Sinaia’ for ‘Sanaia.’
- „ 134, „ 22, 23. „ ‘Cyprus’ for ‘Crete.’

(‘Boundaries in Europe and the Near East.’)

The great purpose which lies before the international powers of the West at the close of the War will be to prevent the recurrence of such devastation and destruction as the War has caused ; the means which will be theirs to apply to this high purpose have been put forward and discussed in a great multitude of writings, some of which point to a hopeful and practical issue, whilst others are purely ideal. None of them, so far as I have seen, take sufficient account of geographical influence upon political dispositions in the great questions of territorial settlement, and yet it is upon successful territorial settlement that the stability of future international peace must surely rest. The Peace League and the League of the Nations, designed to arbitrate in cases of dispute, will be powerful agents for good in the comprehensive field of peace-making, but they will only be able to enforce attention to their decrees by the maintenance of big armies and powerful fleets. They may be happily successful in smoothing out the folds and wrinkles of international disagreements, but they can hardly touch the fundamental motives which underlie those disagreements without recognizing that nine-tenths of them owe their existence to geographical inequalities and difficulties. If, then, we are to consider rightly the general principles of territorial distribution such as may happily lead straightest to ultimate peaceful settlement, we had better begin by briefly recognizing the general causes of war. Right before us lies a great and glaring instance, where the ambitions and ideals of an autocratic power, which has, by good fortune and long endeavour, established

a strong and dominant military position in the world, and is quite prepared to revert to primeval forces of savagery in order to maintain that power, has plunged the whole civilized world into disastrous strife. I need not multiply such instances—history has several to offer—but it must be recognized that they are, after all, the exception and not the rule; so that the doctrine of a clean sweep of all autocracy in favour of world-wide democracy may be a dangerous doctrine as a doctrine of universal application. The basis of any nation's integrity and strength lies in perfect unity of sentiment and ideal amongst its peoples. Where this fails (as it has failed in Mexico, and assuredly in Russia; as it would certainly fail in India should we leave that country to work out its own salvation) it may well be that only the iron hand of a dictator, or military power held by alien government, can ensure the maintenance of law and justice, and save the country from the terrors of anarchy. Usually, however, the incentive to war is to be found in the great problem of the distribution of surplus population—the natural expansion of a people—and this is an incentive which involves geographical considerations and indeed may be dealt with as a purely politico-geographical problem.

Right away from the very darkest ages have savage hordes of people, who have outgrown the power of their land's sustenance, swarmed over indefinite borderlands into alien territories—usually pressing southwards for a place in the sun, and exchanging the hard conditions of wintry highland living (which have hardened their bodies and made

them fighting men) for the warmth and luxury of softer climates and more indolent living. Such eruptions have affected the whole of Europe, and the end of them is not yet. Civilized man still seeks outlets for his energies and for the disposal of his surplus sons and daughters ; and although this universal movement develops more widely and more rapidly in the remoter regions of the world—in America, in Africa, and in the Far East—yet it is a strong war-provoking movement in Europe still. It is a natural effort at the adjustment of peoples to a geographical environment which will meet their aspirations after national economic developments, which adjustment is usually based on terms of racial segregation. We are not now concerned with that which lies beyond Europe—nor are we concerned with Europe beyond the Near East—but the point to remember is that this root cause of boundary violation and aggression is universal, that it is based on laws of nature, and that inasmuch as no artificial restrictions on the output of population are possible, no conventions or leagues can safely fight against it ; and consequently the problems which arise therefrom can only be safely dealt with by an international agreement and fair geographical adjustment. We must know and consider what and where are those waste spaces of the earth which require population ; most especially must we know what class of immigrants are desirable for those spaces ; where the white man, or the yellow man, or the black man can live, and *where he is wanted* ; and the greatest of all good offices that any leagues of peace and of the

nations can fill is the enforcement of the stream of emigrants and colonists in the right directions. What we are, however, immediately concerned with is the geographical adjustments which may be advisable in a hereafter, which we trust will not be remote, in the countries of the Near East so as to secure the best chance of peace, contentment and security. This will be discussed in more or less detail as each country comes before us for description. But here and now I will state briefly the principles which I believe should govern such adjustments in order that I may avoid repeating myself. The first principle is the obvious necessity for dividing self-governing states or nations into separate geographical units in such manner as to set definite and scientific barriers between countries liable to mutual aggression. The next is to give to each individual country space and opportunity for internal development such as may remove all incentive for discontent and desire for encroachment on other preserves. The first difficulty is to define the real basis of nationality, and it is far easier to indicate what does not make a nation than what does. Naturally one's first thoughts turn to racial affinity. People who talk the same language and claim a common heritage of tradition and ancestry might be expected to share the same ideals and aspirations and to be able to evolve a common standard of national self-government. But it is not always so. Indeed the assumption that the racial basis is essentially fundamental to homogeneous nationality is a most dangerous one. Certain writers have made a sort of fetish of the racial claim, but

races have become so disintegrated in these latter days, and so much intermixed, that motives of sordid self-interest will be found generally far to outweigh sentiments of affinity and brotherly affection. The claim of racial affinity affords, however, not a bad platform from which to start national propaganda, and, as a commencement to the complicated process of evolving the foundations of national existence, it may stand for what it is worth. Ties of religion and culture in these days are equally negligible as binding forces in the national amalgam. The most that can be said for them is that they may form a part of a general unity of sentiment which we may call the will of the people, without which it is hopeless to form an effective self-governing national entity. Patriotism again—sheer love of a country—which is the result of environment in the first instance and of education in the next, has certainly to be taken into account; but patriotism can be expressed in the same formula of the people's will and, where it is strongly developed, it is the most potent of binding forces. There is nothing inherent in democracies or republics, or any other form of popular government, that will ensure peace and good-will, either internally or externally. A sound democracy is a tender plant which requires long and careful political nurture; a republic, like a mushroom, may be the offspring of a night, and we need not look far into modern history to find that crude and half-baked democracies and flashlight republics may rapidly breed the very worst and the most pestiferous of all bloody wars—that of civil strife. It is not community of race or religion,

of culture, or even of patriotism alone that makes a nation to stand as a bulwark of peace in the world—a solid four-square tower of strength in the cause of security, justice, and humanity. Absolute unity in right sentiment is the first qualification, unity in ideals such as we find in that most eminent admixture of races, the United States of America; profound belief in the country's future and the heart-stirring form of patriotism which is the cult of the cosmopolitan republics of South America; these are the chief static forces which make for peace in the world, and it is exactly this unity of sentiment, expressed in the will of the people concerned, to which we must first look as the best guarantee for peaceful settlements within definite boundaries. But, even here, we must tread carefully. We must first develop the power of self-government which springs from unity of sentiment and ideal before we can separate peoples into their own national ring-fences and leave them to decide their own destinies without troubling their neighbours. There is no unity of sentiment between the many states and peoples of India, for instance, that could possibly ensure the success of self-government in that country in any other form than that which now exists. Albania, Mexico, and we might add Mesopotamia, seem to be hopeless for evolving the rudimentary principles of self-government. Left (in the words of high political authority) to "stew in their own juice" nothing but anarchy and bloodshed and all the horrors that we are striving against in their worst form seems likely to result. Nor are we quite happy about a self-

governing Ireland. And, yet, there is no doubt about unanimity of sentiment in these countries so far as it can be expressed in favour of independence, only the independence they favour appears to be the independence of the wild cat.

Thus the political problem of "settling" the Balkan States, which has been a political problem for centuries, is likely to be highly complicated and may lead to fierce contention for centuries to come. But hitherto international political problems have been strangely dissociated from geography. We may hope that some, at least, of the indifference to geographical issues which have led to such strange, such elementary, errors in the past when determining the boundaries of states has disappeared from political counsels, yet still there is little sign that the bearing and influence of geographical conditions on political relationships is sufficiently considered, and in this particular problem which concerns the Balkan States simple geography counts for much. In the first place the character of the peoples of the Near East, their idiosyncrasies, aspirations, and ideals have been moulded and shaped by their geographical environment in a way which is hardly perceptible in more civilized Western Europe. The stamp of the untameable mountaineer is on the Montenegrin; the hardness and strength and patriotism of the Serbian is but an index of the quality of his scanty plains and barren hills, affording narrow opportunities for agriculture, for he is heart and soul an agriculturist, thereby evidencing the flat steppes of his origin. The Greek is as cosmopolitan, as uncertain, and as

difficult as his ragged coasts have made him, with all their facilities for trade and commercial plunder. Moreover, the incidents of geography have tended to maintain the separation of Balkan peoples of varied origins, the lines of separation being usually marked by definite ranges and water-partings, which are, in many cases, difficult of access. Thus the old-world Illyrians of classic story appear to have maintained their hold on their ancient territories, and the Albanians can still point to quaint and curious survivals which support their claim to Illyrian origin. The Rumanians are still on the fields of ancient Roman conquest, and have, on the whole, retained a fairly compact national entity for centuries. This they owe chiefly to the Danube, perhaps the most important geographical feature in the Near East. The Bulgars, again (more Hun than Slav), can point to a long and very proud history since they left the Volga steppes and dropped down on the fold of the Southern Slav. There has not been any great ethnical disturbance or intermixture of races here. All alike have felt the weight of the Turkish fist, and it has been more the necessity for combination against a common foe than for any international bond of affection that these States have combined by twos and by threes to fight for the rights of independent existence. Had these States all been peace-loving and unmilitary democracies their undoubted fate would have been confederation under one great Teuton overlord long ago. They would have been part of the German Empire. It is their own fierce loyal antagonism and the military genius of their

kings that has preserved their independence. Kings and courts may be an anachronism, but we must, at least, admit that in a world of infinitely varied form of government, *where good governments are rare only because capable rulers are rare*, they have had their use, and that the teaching of history by no means condemns monarchies. If geographical environment shapes national character (which it most undoubtedly does), then it surely follows that in order to attain contentment and peace amongst the nations their geographical environment should be shaped to suit their idiosyncrasies and needs.

And so we come to the critical question of what are the fundamental conditions of national environment that conduce to the development of strong and healthy self-governing nations? We have considered the collateral questions of affinity in race and sentiment, and giving them all the weight that is due to them, and classifying them under the comprehensive term of the people's will, what, after all, are the primary necessities of geographical habitat? The first is undoubtedly *space*. There must be room enough for development on the lines best suited to the character and strength of the people if they are to remain contented and happy. This condition of space is well illustrated in the great western continent. The people of the United States, which is a united bond of human specimens from every nationality of the globe, with but an hereditary primary affinity with the Anglo-Saxon race, have been moulded and welded together gradually into perhaps the most powerful nationality in the world,

simply because there has been room enough in the past for all comers, and in the geographical variety of the vast continent of America every band of newcomers can find a suitable environment. When, indeed, the space becomes restricted we hear of measures for narrowing the avenues of approach, such as the Monroe doctrine, and it immediately becomes a danger signal. In the Argentine Republic there is, perhaps, a yet more striking example of a human amalgam of many races moulded into concrete form by wise provision for the universal cult of patriotism within the limits of a vast and still unfilled area. In a comparatively small number of assistants and engineers employed on boundary demarcation in the Southern Andes I have counted as many as twelve distinct nationalities. Even the Welshmen who, moved by the same spirit which took the first emigrants to North America, had made a home for themselves in the south and drawn a ring-fence round the Chubut valley, are now as essentially and as patriotically Argentine as is any Irish nationalist who has adopted that country. In Ireland, indeed, we have an example of want of space, combined with want of supreme power to assimilate races, which is such an important factor in nation-making. The antagonism of Gael and Kelt is intensified by the narrow limits of the Island in which both are held up. Space, then, is the first condition of success in international territorial distribution—space for fair development. Then follow conditions of cultivable land and means of communication with other countries, and open ports for facilitating trade and the exchange

of produce. Finally, it is beyond question important that boundaries should be well defined ; that they should be difficult to violate and as strongly defensive in character as nature or art can make them ; the chance of active aggression being almost in exact proportion with the facility for carrying it out.

In considering the conditions, political and geographical, which surround the countries of the Nearer East, we can touch generally on just three features which seem to be most worth attention in respect to the principles which I have just laid down. The geographical configurations which have so largely determined the destinies of the Near East are, as elsewhere in the world, the relative dispositions of sea and land as the result of geological formation. In Silesia and in the Rhodope highlands of Bulgaria are the old resistant land masses which, cut off from Asia Minor by the depression of the Ægean Sea, have, through geologic ages, offered resistance to the advancing waves of sedimentary derivation which, crumpled and upheaved by the gradual contraction of the earth's crust, developed into the mountain system of Eastern Europe. Starting from the Mediterranean Coast, north of Corsica, these mountain waves extend continuously to the Carpathians and Balkans. Breaking against the hard Slavonian mass, they split, and a stream diverged southward, which became the Dinaric Alps, whilst another and greater divergence traversed Italy. The sea once enclosed within the double curve of the Carpathian and Transylvanian Alps dried up and disappeared from the face of nature, left the Danube to break through

the chain at the Iron Gates and to become the principal waterway of the Balkan States. For Bulgaria it is the open way to the Black Sea. Hungary, too, holds the right of Danube communications, but Serbia could lately only use that right by grace of permission from other nations, that is to say, that Rumania and Bulgaria hold the Danube between Serbia and the Black Sea. Every country, to be contented and happy, wants its waterway outlet either by sea or by river. The old resistant continental masses, young folded mountains, and the deep-sea depressions of the Ægean and Adriatic are thus the primary geographical agents in determining the territorial dispositions of the Near East. In Slavonia these hard old resistant rocks of primeval ages determine a subsidiary mountain system of some complexity of formation which has been of great historical importance, and will continue to be so in the future.

The limestone which forms the outer, or marginal, folds of the Central Alpine ranges is the predominant feature in the Dinaric Alps. Weather action has reduced this limestone to the remarkable condition of rugged complexity which is prevalent in the Karst country, where bare hard rock, riddled with depressions, holes, and caves, have proved to be such a troublesome obstacle to the Italian advance towards Trieste and such a useful factor in Austrian resistance. The Dinaric Alps are not lofty as mountains generally are reckoned (the highest peak, Dormitor, in Montenegro, is 8000 feet), but, owing to the peculiarity of feature which this weather-worn limestone presents,

are peculiarly difficult to traverse. The geological formations which distinguish the Dinaric system are pure limestone on the outer or coast ridges, impure limestone on the central range, and sand-stone in the interior hills. So inaccessible and so rugged is the general nature of the system that there is hardly a passage to be found through the Dinaric Alps, nor a pass of any consequence across the backbone of the jagged line of peaks that lie between the Karst country and the Drin River south of Montenegro. Thus it is that the traffic of the Balkan Peninsula is forced into a comparatively narrow way between these impassable Dinarics and the great wedge-shaped upland of Rhodope, a passage which, through all history, has been the main link between Central Europe and the Ægean, linking Belgrade to Salonika. Here, indeed, are fertile basins at intervals, and the best agricultural areas are to be found lying in the folds of the minor hills which enclose it. This passage becomes now of great importance in the German programme for the spread of Pan-Germanism. At present it is in German hands, where we trust that it will not remain. In the past it has ever been the one great object of attainment to tribes and peoples of the north swarming southwards. But it has never been highly populated, nor have its agricultural opportunities been fully developed, for continuous occupation is naturally regarded as impossible along a line perpetually open to the tramp and the terror of armed invaders.

The dispositions of nature have shaped the destinies of nations in many ways, and in none perhaps more

surely than in the framing of those arteries or means of communication by which the traffic of the country is maintained internally, such as afford the vitally necessary facilities for export and import and maintain the circulation of trade and commerce just as the arteries of the body maintain the pulsations of human life. The same facility for approach and internal movement leads to the destruction of a country when foreign influences, either military or commercial, prevail against it, so that the acquisition of a favourable port on the coast-line or of an important right-of-way is of no use whatsoever as a factor in the making of a country when that country is too feeble or too mercenary to attend to the first principles of defence. But, apart from military interference or commercial boycott, no country can ever hope to become powerful, wealthy (and consequently contented), even in piping times of peace, that does not possess the geographical facilities for the circulation of its commercial life-blood. In the readjustment of frontiers this will be found to be one of the first and most important considerations, and the accidents of land-form and configuration will have to be most carefully studied in order to find the opportunity for a fair adjustment of this phase of geographical equilibrium. So long as a developing country, growing in agricultural wealth and in physical man power, is under the necessity of appealing to some other country for a right of commercial highway which can only be obtained by grace or favour, there is little chance of that permanent peace between the two countries which is the offspring of

mutual independence. Herein lies at present the crux of the dispute between Italy and Austria and the kernel of the most important Balkan nut to be cracked. The problem of communications between the coast and the interior from points on the Adriatic shores will present most forcible complications when the political authority of the greater powers come to a settling up of accounts at the close of the War. Briefly, the position is as follows. Austria and the Hungarian plains are bound to keep that precious outlet to the sea which is indicated by the ports of Trieste and Fiume, lately threatened by Italy. Bosnia and Herzegovina have no other outlet inasmuch as their drainage system trends northward through deep canyons and difficult approaches to the Save. Commercially, no doubt, these states are unimportant, but strategically, so long as they are a part of Austria, they assure her maintenance of the Istrian ports. Dalmatia, too, becomes of strategic importance as a factor in Austrian domination of the Adriatic. It may, indeed, be doubted whether Austria has any desire for southern territorial extension that is not based on strategic principles connected with the necessity for preserving this outlet to the Adriatic. South of the Istrian promontory the next gateway to the interior from the Adriatic is formed by the Narenta estuary. Here, indeed, is a connection with Herzegovina which might be further developed than it is. There was in Roman times a road from Spalato to Gradiska on the Save, but there is now no complete line of railway on this route. The Narenta River cutting through the Karst formations leaves room

for a narrow-gauge line through the gorge to be followed by a "rack and pinion" extension over the Ivan saddle to Sarajevo—but this can never be a line of any commercial importance. The geographical connection of Bosnia and Herzegovina is not with the Adriatic but with Serbia, where a possibly southern outlet may be found in the Drin River of Albania, which forms the next natural gate through the Dinaric system, south of Montenegro. The Drin waterway, which traverses Northern Albania and links up the important Serbian plains of Kossovo with Skutari and the Boyana estuary, may hereafter prove of great importance. At present it is practically undeveloped, together with the possibilities which lie in the Durazzo line which traverses Albania farther south. These geographical features may have a most important effect in shaping Albanian destinies. These considerations will be dealt with in connection with Greece later on.

Consider the broad features of the geography of the Balkan States and you will find that their history and their destinies are written on the face of it. They have been flanked to the northward and eastward for centuries by the wide undeveloped steppes of Russia, and to the south by the paralysing influences of Greek and Turkish misgovernment; with the forbidding wall of the Dinaric system shutting out the Adriatic from commercial use, and the wild central uplands of Rhodope forcing agriculture and trade into narrow transverse ways, which are periodically subject to all the devastation of armed invasion. How, then, was continuous economic development possible, and

what could be expected but a rough and virile race of people who, sprung from northern conquerors, Slavs, Monguls, or Huns, are but the reproduction of these progenitors in an environment which favours most of their original characteristics ? Through communication with civilized Europe has necessarily been forced westward. To the east the great water-way of the Danube leads but to the Black Sea and is there locked by the Turkish gateway of the Dardanelles. To the south those of the Vardar and the Maritza were, till lately, cut off from the *Aegean* by Greece and Turkey. The commercial arteries of the Balkan States have been in perpetual dispute until, finally, the greatest dispute of all has arisen from the claim of Germany to absorb the chief of them, not at all for the development or benefit of the states concerned, but for the furtherance of her own ambitious programme. We may hope, however, that with the disappearance of Turkey from Thrace and Macedonia, combined with fresh political conditions arising from the present War, opening the way to new and more promising territorial distributions, those geographical factors which most influence the material advancement and the contentment of a nation may perchance receive better recognition when the day for settlement shall come. Meanwhile, it is interesting to note how the Romans dealt with the problem of communications in the Near East, where their acquisitions were eventually to prove the main cause of their downfall. The first, and most important, step in the practice of Roman administration was ever that of road-making. If

there was a practical way in which Italy could extend her influence and Rome maintain her rule across the Adriatic and over the Balkan Peninsula it was most surely utilized. So difficult was it, however, that the removal of the seat of the Roman Empire from Imperial Rome to Constantinople was mainly caused by the necessity for a nearer approach to these colonies and conquered territories which centred about Southern Rumania. Nevertheless, roads of which remnants are still visible were carried from the Adriatic shores into the interior wherever practicable, and it is certain that in Roman times communication between the Adriatic and the interior of the peninsula was far more effectually maintained than it is now. About 168 B.C. a road was commenced which ultimately connected old Rome with new Rome (Constantinople), called the Via Egnatia. This road started from Durazzo on the Adriatic coast and passed by Ochridâ, Monastir, Salonika, and Kavalla to Perinthus (then rivalling Byzantium), and continued to Armenia and Persia. Then followed the road connecting Monastir with Sofia and the Danube. A third road from the mouth of the Drin once ran to Nish and the Danube, but this, like the Monastir-Sofia road, is not a continuous road at present. The Narenta opening was not neglected for connecting the coast with Sarajevo and the Save, branching southward to Salonika; but the most important route in Roman times, as now, was that which crosses the hill country between Belgrade and the Morava, and then follows the Nish valley up the Nishava, crosses the divide by the Dragoman Pass (2400 feet),

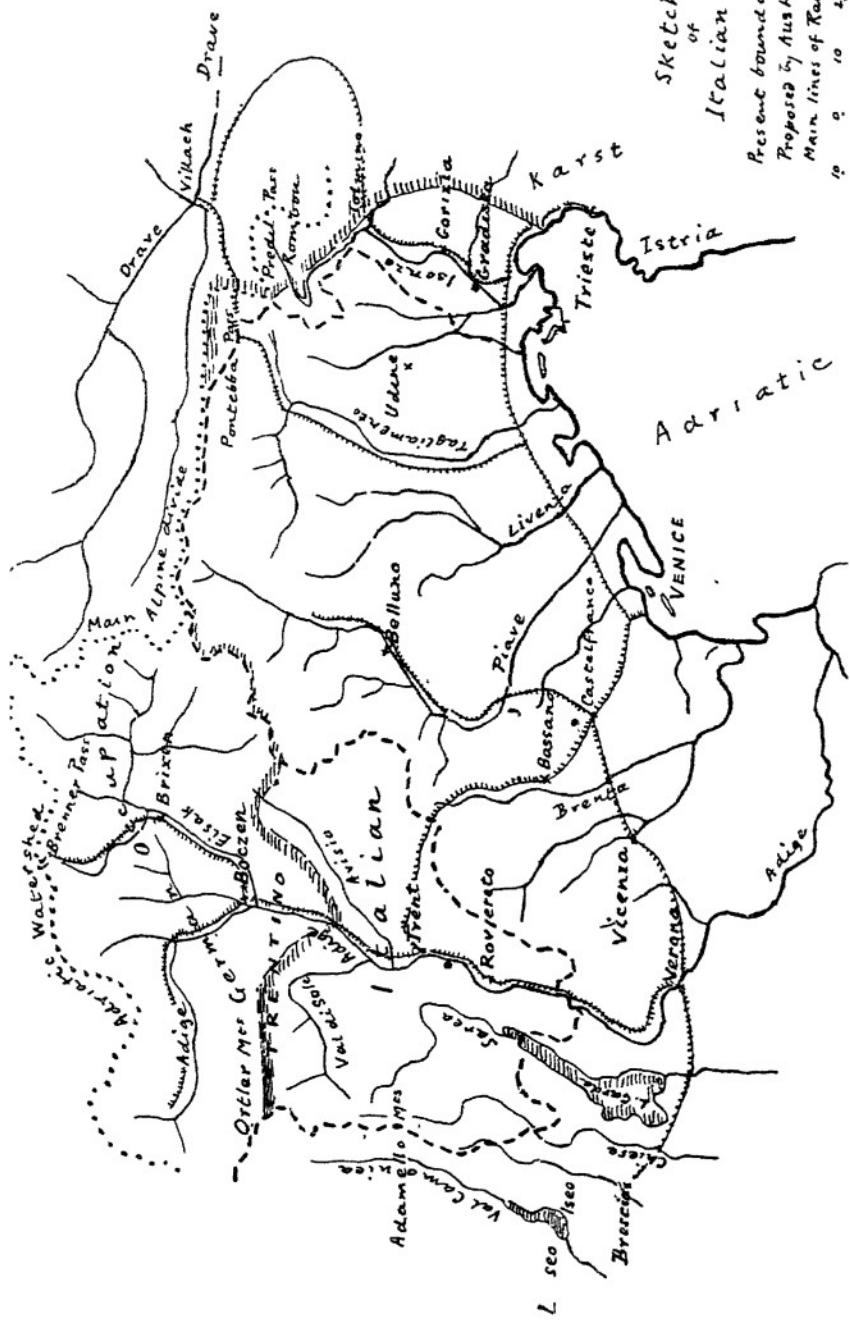
and drops to Sofia (1800 feet). So far the modern Orient express follows the Roman trail, but beyond Sofia, after crossing the divide between the Isker and the Maritza drainage, the old Roman road diverged somewhat from the line of modern rail to Trajan's Gate and Philippopolis. This was ever the gate between East and West. These roads lasted for centuries, for it was not till the close of the fourth century A.D. that Slavs and Bulgars displaced the old Romanized inhabitants. It must be repeated that these roads were never intended for the commercial development of the countries they crossed, although there was, indeed, at one time considerable Italian trade from Ragusa, but they were designed on a world-wide plan for the march of armies and the military administration of conquered territories. What Rome effected by roads Germany hopes to effect by railways. Both Roman roads and German railways point to the East. To both the Balkan Peninsula is a comparatively unproductive and barbarous territory (as indeed it was to the Greeks), designed by Providence as a hindrance rather than a help to the extension of wide-reaching designs much farther afield. Those who would study the question of old-world roadways in the Balkans cannot do better than refer to Miss Newbigin's most interesting book, to which I am much indebted and which deals more fully with it.

CHAPTER II

ITALY

ITALY, although her geographical position on the map of Europe hardly justifies us in including her as a part of the Near East, is so deeply concerned in the future destinies of the Balkan States that her present position in relation to them and her aspirations for the future must necessarily be regarded as inseparable from Balkan considerations. Why did Italy decide to range herself alongside of France and England in the struggle against the Central Powers and throw in her lot with the Allies, thus sacrificing old international friendships and practically reversing the policy of the last half-century ? We may certainly credit Italy with the same sentiment of national chivalry, the same desire to support the claims of world-wide humanity and justice, that we claim for France and for ourselves ; but, in her case, it was not merely the infringement of treaties by Germany that called her to arms, for she did not purpose to fight Germany. There was a long outstanding settlement with Austria which might happily be brought to a conclusion should the Powers of the Entente

be victorious, and such a result, if all her aspirations were realized, would be the remaking of Italy. International disputes between Italy and Austria lay in two distinct spheres of geographical environment and military action, although both of them concerned her frontiers. One of them was the "Italia irredenta" of the Trentino in the north and the other was the command of the Adriatic in the east, and it is the latter which brings Italy into direct connection with Balkan political geography. No country in Europe (if we exclude the possible exception of Spain) ought to be so well provided by nature with strong and secure frontiers as Italy. On the north are the majestic ranges of the Alps, massed in serried ranks and close formation, but crossed here and there by difficult ways which, by reason of their very difficulty, should all the more readily prove strongly defensible. East, south, and west is the open sea. Now I have already stated my reasons—reasons founded not only on the teaching of history, but on actual practical experience—that no land frontier can be more effective, no geographical feature can be better adapted to maintain the security from trespass and the consequent peace of a country than a mountain system and a boundary based on its main divide. This, of course, for a land frontier. With the sea there arises a new series of conditions of much complexity ; yet, considered generally, a sea frontier is, perhaps, even better than a mountain frontier. Thus Italy, both by sea and by land, is geographically a much-favoured country. It is to this geographical configuration that we must ascribe all the might and magnificence



Sketch
of
Italian frontier

Present boundary - - -
Proposed by Austria

Main lines of Railway

0 10 20 30 miles

of the past Roman Empire which, in the height of its glory, was only once seriously threatened from without by a sea power. It is significant, perhaps, that the power of Rome was not finally broken in Italy, but in the Balkans. With all these great natural advantages, yet is the strength of modern Italy much discounted by reason of the unscientific alignment of her northern frontier and the geographical environment of her eastern sea. Two great indentations disfigure the northern boundary of Italy. One important salient from the Swiss frontier reaches down southwards to a point near Como. This is the Ticino indentation, the story of which is concerned with the feudal policies of mediæval times. The Val Levantina and the Val d'Ossola were purchased from Milan in 1426 in exchange for a vast sum of money and certain commercial privileges. This was before Switzerland possessed a nationality. Locano and Lugano were ceded in 1512, but it was not till 1813 that Bellinzona and the Val Levantina were officially recognized as the Swiss Canton of Ticino. The Ticino is generally an Italian-speaking country. On the whole, the natural frontier and the political frontier of Northern Italy coincide, and as a natural frontier hardens into consistency with time it becomes a racial frontier. But no such racial adaptation has occurred in this lapse from the geographically scientific frontier represented by the Canton of Ticino. Still less has it occurred in the yet more pronounced and infinitely more fatal alienation of the Trentino salient protruding southward from the Austrian frontier. There is no reason-

able theory to be advanced in favour of the Trentino indentation, and it is impossible to believe in the long-continued existence of a boundary so fatally opposed to all scientific theories of boundary-making. The north Italian frontier is of exceptional interest as an example of an extended mountain barrier which is almost ideal in its geographical conditions for the greater part, but although it is a mountain barrier it illustrates fully the weakness and futility of such a boundary scheme when once the principle of following a main divide is abandoned. Valleys are crossed ; local interests are divided ; racial and social affinities disregarded ; mountains are traversed with an air of readiness which suggests that the boundary can only exist on paper, and a permanent international grievance established which can only be removed by force. One reason, and the principal reason, why the Alps have failed to serve as a protection to Italy from northern invasions is that since the fall of the Roman Empire the Italians have never been masters of the southern approaches to their crest. Invaders from the north, from Hannibal and Hasdrubal to Francis I. of France and Napoleon, have found ways across the Alps for their armies, and, in modern history, the same state has at many times and in many places held the country on either side of the mountains. In the past the Holy Roman Empire, Burgundy, and the dominions of Saxony, and, in the present day, both Switzerland and Austria, as we have seen, are astride the watershed. The reason why the Alps have not served the purpose of international division as effectually as

have the Northern Andes or the Pyrenees is mainly geographical. Dr. Ratzel of Leipzig summarizes the situation as follows : " It must not be overlooked that the Swiss Central Alps are not flanked by a developed South Alpine system such as that which rises to importance in the Bergamesque Alps. This constitutes a distinct Italian Alpine land, which extends through the Brescian, Vicentine, and Venetian Alps to the western slopes of the Julian Alps. The Western Alps Italy shares with France ; the Central Alps with Switzerland ; the Southern Alps, where they stand out as an independent group, are wholly Italian." The district south of the Ortler group, the country between the Stelvio Pass and Botzen on the north and Brescia and Verona on the south, is described by Mr. Freshfield as one of the most varied and fascinating districts of the Alps, distinctly Italian in character, with its combination of space and mountain grandeur. " Its charm is due not so much to the height of its peaks as to their variety ; granite walls and glacier curtains facing dolomite towers and pinnacles of the strangest form. At the feet of the mountains lie open valleys, rich in all the luxuriance of southern foliage and studded with prosperous villages ; it is a land of maize and vines and fertile slopes." The geographical conformation of these Trentino Alps is one of some complexity. Broadly speaking, three lofty ridges, or ranges, run transversely to the general strike of the Alpine system, that is to say, they run from north to south, rendering communication comparatively easy from the plains of Brescia and Verona northward, but presenting

great obstacles to movement from east to west. The western range, which is the most significant, has its roots in the great Ortler group of mountains, and strikes southwards through the Adamello group till it loses itself near the eastern shores of the Iseo Lake. It separates the Val Camonica of Italy from the Austrian valley of the Chiese. The principal pass across it is that of Tonale, leading into the Val di Sole, which follows a complicated and circuitous course to the north-east before junction with the Adige. The next great ridge is that which, taking off from the Brenta group of mountains just south of Val di Sole, separates the Chiese from the lower Sarca, draining into Lake Garda. This, again, is traversed by the upper Sarca; the third ridge is that which interposes between the Lake Garda drainage and the Adige. The boundary between Italy and the Trentino (or the Austrian Tyrol) is carried by the western range, which, starting from the Ortler mountains, dies away in the plains to the north-west of Brescia near Lake Iseo; and its eastern boundary is practically the eastern rim of the Adige basin. Consequently, the Trentino may be roughly stated to consist of the basin, comparatively small, of the Sarca (or Garda tributary) and that of the Adige. The upper tributaries of the Adige, flowing down from their cradles under the peaks of the great Alpine watershed, and gathering like the spokes of a fan near Botzen, do not offer many facilities for the crossing of the Southern Alps. The well-known Brenner connecting Innsbruck with Botzen is, of course, the chief, and it is one of the highways of the

Alps, the line of railway which follows the Adige from Botzen continuing this great central artery of communication to Verona and the plains of Italy. But excepting this Brenner route, the backbone of the Alpine system, the main watershed throughout the whole width of the northern Trentino is singularly free from passes of any note, and we may easily gather that the approaches from the south formed by the many-headed drainage system of the Adige are mostly steep, cliff-guarded gorges and rugged mountain waterways, which offer no sort of opportunity for the passage of troops or even of casual travellers. It has been said on good authority that the very ruggedness and impassability of these southern approaches, this land of tumbled mountain masses and hidden gorges of fantastic shape and weird beauty, is a sufficient safeguard to the frontier of northern Italy without further definition ; and this view is supported to a certain extent by the fact that from Botzen northward the population is German-speaking and not Italian. It would be impossible, in my opinion, to define a boundary from west to east, south of the main divide, which would be of any practical value in separating the two racial elements. Actual demarcation would be impracticable ; it would, at best, become an indefinite and irregular artificial feature, with all the many disadvantages that an unrecognizable boundary, transverse to the general drainage system, always possesses. It would still leave the power of initiative in the enemy's hands so long as he retained the one great commanding pass linking the railway systems north and south

of the Alps, together with such other passes and passages as might be developed in the progress of attack. To this must be added the enormous military advantage of fighting generally downhill, and of retaining a series of commanding positions above the enemy as he moves forwards. What this means has already been quite sufficiently illustrated during the progress of the War between Italy and Austria. The salient driven into Italy southwards from the Austrian Alps may roughly be described as a huge triangle with its base on the main Alpine divide and its two sides defined, the one by the Ortler-Adamello range and the other by the eastern rim of the Adige basin. These two mountain-sides do not meet at the apex of the triangle southward, for Lake Garda divides them at the point, and they open out into the plains of Lombardy. Thus, from the Austrian point of view, a magnificent base of operations is provided from the main Alps southward for a force which, moving by the valleys of the Adige and Chiese, can concentrate at the head of Lake Garda for the invasion of Italy. The flanks are splendidly protected. As an Austrian boundary it must be admitted that this divergence southward is supported by a series of splendid divides, offering no weak points to invite aggression from east or west. So strong and unassailable are they that three years of warfare conducted from the Italian side by forces of mountaineers who have probably never been matched in history for skill and gallantry has made practically no impression on them. On the other hand, the Austrian power of concentration within the Trentino

has seriously threatened an irruption into the plains of Lombardy—an invasion which was only checked by Russian and Italian activities elsewhere. Italy, equally with Austria, should secure command of the main passes over the Alpine divide. Her northern boundary should be none other than the rugged backbone of the Alps, overlooking all lines of approach from northern valleys, unmistakable as a geographical feature, easy to demarcate and to maintain, impossible to shift by any political pretension. And yet Italy has never claimed the main divide as her northern boundary, probably because the claims of race in the upper affluents and valleys of the Adige are against her. This is one of those instances where the attainment of security by the adoption of a scientific boundary does undoubtedly clash with the claims of racial affinity. But it must be remembered that German ~~irruptions~~ into other territories than those of the Fatherland are so universal that, if they were accepted as supporting a national claim to the districts they occupy, the ideals of Pan-Germanism would be well on the way to accomplishment. The remarkable divergence from the scientific line of international boundary has been recognized even by Austria as a defective international arrangement which requires readjustment, but the opportunity for such readjustment only offered itself with the declaration of war by Austria against Serbia.

Under Article VII. of the Treaty of Triple Alliance, Italy was entitled to compensation for the disturbances raised in the Balkans which might seriously affect her interests. This was not considered as

fairly balanced by Austria's demand for compensation for Italy's occupation of certain islands in the Aegean and Mediterranean (including Rhodes) and of the port of Valona (or Avlona) on the Albanian coast, north of Corfu, which safeguarded her interest in the Adriatic; and Austria, in order to avoid a war with Italy with the Serbian difficulty on her hands, proposed a readjustment of the Trentino boundary. Austria's proposed boundary starts from a peak to the south-east of the Ortler group and follows a local divide as far eastwards as about half-way to Botzen. It then turns to the south-east, crossing the Adige about twenty miles above Trent, bends north-eastwards along the northern rim of the Aviso basin, cuts off the head of the Aviso where it turns eastward from Latemar, and runs to a junction with the eastern boundary of the Trentino salient. It is, of course, a mountain boundary following comparatively minor divides wherever possible, and it is designed to cover Botzen, with all the German-speaking peoples about it. It is defective where it crosses the valleys of the Adige and Aviso. Italy claimed more than this. She claimed Botzen and demanded that the boundary should cross the Eisack tributary of the Adige at Klausen and should pass above the head of the Aviso and include Cortina before junction with the eastern salient. This is, undoubtedly, a more scientific line, and one which gives better opportunity for defence against aggression from the north. Austria further offered a rectification of the eastern boundary of Northern Italy to the Adriatic. Here she was prepared to concede Osternia, Rombon, Polmino, Gorizia,

Gradisco, and Monfalcone, carrying the boundary to a point on the Adriatic about half-way between Monfalcone and Trieste. From the strictly geographical standpoint this boundary is no better than the old one. The Italians wanted Trieste, and nothing short of Trieste, with its Italian-speaking population and its dominance of the Adriatic. Moreover, they were not prepared to pay the price demanded in cash as compensation for the outlay on public works and the withdrawal, or disbanding, of troops which would be necessary in order to clear the ceded districts. It was the possession of Trieste which practically decided the issue between peace and war ; for the gain in the Alps of so much mountain region as was included between the Austrian offer and the Italian claim on the north of Trentino (considering the prevalence of the German element about Botzen and north of it) would hardly justify war in itself. The recovery of the Italian-speaking districts of the Trentino and the readjustment of her northern boundary by carrying it to the main divide of the Alps, which, for military and defensive reasons, is essential to security, is by no means the limit, or even the main factor, in Italy's aspirations, however dear it may be to the hearts of Italy's patriots. The problem of the Adriatic is far more insistent, and it is on the favourable issues of that problem that Italy will base her claim to a victorious campaign. The command of the Adriatic and the dismemberment of Austria are Italy's war aims, and for this she is making a bold bid for the possession of the ports of Trieste and Fiume (the only outlets for Hungary)

and the command of the Straits of Otranto from Valona.

The geographical configuration of Dalmatia becomes one of the great factors in the making of the future history of Italy's relations with the Near East. The curves of the great earth-waves, which, deflected southwards by the resistant masses in Silesia, determine the configuration of the Dinaric Alps, become the dominant feature of Dalmatian geographical conformation. The Dinarics take their rise in the Karst country, which roughly connects them with the Julian Alps. That strange upland feature—the Karst—has become familiar enough to us by the history of the Italian progress on the Carso during this War. It embraces a limestone tableland, weather-worn and drilled into a vast honeycombed formation almost fantastic in its extraordinary diversity of rough, rugged plateau, deep depression, beetling crag and eccentric tunnels and caves. Only one river gathers strength enough to force its way across the thirsty Karst (which absorbs the rainfall in innumerable depressions) and that is the Narenta, through the compressed gorge of which river a narrow-gauge railway has been constructed connecting the Adriatic with the interior to the north of Montenegro. From the Karst formations to the northern frontiers of Montenegro, the Dinaric Alps with a central limestone core flanked by sand ridges and marl beds, runs straight and stiff, a rugged and formidable wall of uncompromising difficulty, till it culminates in Montenegro, where the system widens and increases in altitude (the highest peak, Dormitor in Montenegro,

being about 8000 feet above sea) and then falls in mountain spurs to the mouth of the Drin River, north of Albania. Thus, through the very centre of the long maritime province of Dalmatia, there runs a dividing wall, unbroken and presenting the greatest possible physical difficulty to traverse. There are practically no passes over the Dinaric backbone. Thus we see the province divided into two very distinct theatres of development — one the coastal region, narrow and commercially dependent on sea transport for its existence, with seaports of great natural beauty at intervals, and connected by all ties of trade interest, as well as largely by those of race, with Italy. But for the accident of the Adriatic depression Italy, geographically, would include the Dinaric frontier. Regarding the Adriatic as hardly more than an inland lake, it is difficult to conceive that Italian interests are not paramount in a district so greatly shut off from the interior by a natural wall. This geographical condition, however, ceases towards the south when communication between the coast and the interior becomes possible. No part of Montenegro claims Italian affinities, and, south of Montenegro, the Drin is entirely an Albanian water-way.

It has already been pointed out that the possession of Dalmatia and the coast-line of Istria is a strategic necessity to Austria ; and it appears that it is equally a strategic necessity to Italy if Italy is to command the Adriatic, because of her long stretch of eastern coast devoid of ports and harbours. That command depends upon it. There is no compromise possible.

The crux of the War so far as Italy is concerned lies there. Both in Istria and along the Dalmatian coast the Italian element is strong amongst the inhabitants, quite strong enough (without entering into details of a possibly apocryphal census) to warrant the claims of Italy on the score of race affinity. The commercial influence of Italy would be welcomed along the Dalmatian coast, but the "will of the people" might resent permanent annexation, although the rough crest of the Dinaric Alps makes a sharp divide between Latin and Slav interests. Whilst the majority of the educated people west of the Dinarics is essentially Italian in custom and ideal, those of the east are equally Slav. Geographers will recognize that the Dinarics offer a magnificent natural barrier, but it seems probable, nevertheless, that the occupation of certain important positions on the coast of Dalmatia and the islands which lie off it, would be accepted ultimately for the maintenance of a new boundary which will round off Italy's claims for dominance in this part of the European seas. But, obviously, there is danger of conflicting interests on such a frontier. Italy's aims are only attainable if she allies herself with those subject peoples of Austria who are now intent on the propaganda of a federation which shall embrace the Southern Slav races in one independent nationality. Fortunately, this policy of Austrian dismemberment is one that is welcome, not only to the peoples who are seeking an independent existence under a government of their own creation, but to those of the Entente Powers who are concerned with the blocking and breaking

of Germany's ambitious developments towards the south-east. The fate of Croatia and Slovenia becomes thus entangled in the political net with Italy's ambitions ; but the consideration of the mutual frontier which will be developed between Italy and the Southern Slav states, and the geographical conditions which belong to those frontiers, will be better understood when we deal with the complicated problem of their confederation. It is enough to note for the present that if Slovenia and Croatia are detached from Austria and Hungary, and are free to unite in a federation with other Southern Slav states, then the old Austria disappears ; and that the tendency of such an eventuality as the political unity of aims between Italy and Slavia (as we may call this possible federation) is absolutely favourable to the security of England in the East and the domination of the Suez Canal. But the possession of Trieste and Fiume and of the Dalmatian Coast regions in the north of the Adriatic will not, of itself, render Italy's command of that sea complete unless she also holds the keys of the southern gateway in the Straits of Otranto. These straits are less than fifty miles in width, and their position relatively to the Adriatic is not dissimilar from that of Gibraltar at the entrance to the Mediterranean. Where the Dinaric system, rising in altitude and extending in width as it trends south-eastward, facing the Adriatic, effects a junction with the rugged highlands of Montenegro, there, geographically, the direct interest of Italy in the eastern seaboard may be said to end. The coast ports are connected with each other as far south as

CHAPTER III

THE CZECHS AND SLOVAKS

AMONGST many other problems which have been forced upon our attention by the War are those connected with the great Slav races of Europe, their wide geographical diffusion, their formidable numbers, their culture and ideals, their aspirations for the future. I fancy that to many of us the fact that Russia was the great home of Slav races, and that, more or less indefinitely, those races extended widespread beyond the borders of Russia, but were still, so to speak, under Russia's watchful care, and could claim her powerful assistance in times of stress and national danger, was about the sum of our knowledge before the War. Which were the true Slav races of Europe, and where we could define the limits of their habitat, was to many of us exceedingly doubtful. Now we know a great deal more about the Slav, and we know that there is a general consensus of national aspiration common to them all (in spite of the usual political disease of contradictory and sometimes violent factions) in the direction of free and independent government and liberty to follow their own

than the occupation of a coast port, by declaring a protectorate over Albania. This is a matter in which no geographical considerations can be said to enter, and the effect of it on Albania, whether beneficial or otherwise, will be considered in relation to that country when we deal with it. For the present, at any rate, we can only regard it as a good omen for the future of a most distressful country.

The position of Italy, then, regarded as a kingdom in the category of the Near East in relation to Balkan problems, may be briefly summarized, apart from the domestic question of the rearrangement of her northern frontier and the reclamation of "Italia irredenta." If Italy realizes her aspirations and secures the valley of the Isonzo and the Istrian promontory, together with the ports of Trieste and Fiume and certain points of vantage on the long littoral strip of Dalmatian territory, and the islands near it, part at least of a great geographical barrier interposed between the Teutonic Empire and the *Ægean* Sea will be realized. This is one of the great problems of the War. Italy in future will, we trust, join hands with a new Serbia (which will be the greatest of the states of the Southern Slav federation) to keep the peace of Europe. Her geographical interests will be largely increased ; her commercial opportunities will, undoubtedly, be extended equally with her geographical outlook ; but by far the most important result of the War which she is at present waging against the hosts of Austria will be her position as joint guardian of those eastern highways which have ever formed the basis of Balkan disputes, and the

assurance that Southern, as well as South-Eastern, Europe will be protected from Germanic advance. Clearly, in the case of Italy, a peace which merely restored the geographical status before the War would be a useless and illusory termination to her sacrifices and splendid achievements. We may hope, then, that not only will the northern boundaries of Italy be defined by the great Alpine divide, and her frontiers be thereby rendered secure, but that her eastern boundary will be defined by strong positions on the Dalmatian coast such as will enclose the depression of the Adriatic Sea and command the narrow rim of its eastern shores.

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ideals of culture and development. From what particular spheres, spread under northern skies and swept by withering blasts, the Slav races originally emigrated when they swarmed southwards in successive waves until they overran the greater part of the Near East in the early centuries of our era, we need not trouble ourselves to enquire. At present we are only concerned with certain sections of Slav nationality outside of Russia. These are the Poles, whose original habitat is the basin of the Vistula, the Czechs and Slovaks, two closely affiliated branches of the race who, under Austrian domination, occupy a great part of Bohemia and Hungary; and there is the Southern or Jugo-Slav division which includes Serbia, Bosnia, Herzegovina, Montenegro and Dalmatia occupying an enormous block of the Balkan Peninsula—all of them subject races with the exception (lately) of Montenegro and Serbia. It is as well to note here that Bulgaria is not a true Slav state. The Bulgars by origin are rather Hun than Slav, and the fact that they have been politically recognized as Slav is entirely due to the assimilative characteristic of the Slav race, which (as so often happens in history) furnishes an example of a subject people gradually extending their social influence over their conquerors until the latter become practically one in culture and ideal with them, whilst still generally preserving their racial integrity. The Slav, originally of the northern steppes, has brought with him agricultural proclivities from his northern home. His ideals and affections turn ever towards the land. He has not developed the ambitions and characteristics of his

rulers, but he has taken those rulers into his social keeping and taught them his pastoral ways and manner of life, and this, to some extent, has changed the national character. The particular section of the Slav communities which is known as the Czecho-Slovak, or Northern Slav, division occupies Bohemia and Hungary. They were once directly connected with the Southern Slavs, but now are separated geographically, and, to a certain extent, ethnically and linguistically. Their position is this. The Austrian Germans of the Austrian Empire are directly opposed to granting any political concessions whatever to the Slavs, because any form of federation would give predominance to the Slav element in opposition to the German; the Slavs being geographically compact and united, whilst the German minority is distributed over Slav territories in small factions. Germans and Magyars alike believe that either federation or independence on the part of the Slavs would mean the end of the Austrian monarchy. The Poles will never form part of a federal Austria, neither will the Jugo-Slavs, who favour a Balkan Slav federation; and the Ruthenes (little Russians) would leave Austria with the Poles. The result of the secession of the Southern Slav races from Austria would be that some ten million Czecho-Slovaks would probably be left with twenty millions of Austro-Magyars in the northern provinces, a position so unfavourable that it is not to be wondered at that the Czecho-Slovaks most strongly strike for separation and independence. Any attempt at federation on the part of Austria would mean the loss to the Magyars of all their political privileges in

Slovakia, Croatia, and Transylvania, which to the Magyar would be a result not one whit better than that which would ensue from the total dismemberment of Austria. The Magyar would certainly secede. Clearly the political fate of Austria is in the melting-pot. Independently of other important reasons affecting the same question, there can be little doubt that the final secession of the great Slav element of Austrian population would mean the break up of the Austrian monarchy altogether.

We will, however, consider the problem from quite another and more directly intimate point of view. Is it possible that an independent state, Czechoslovakia, can be carved out of Europe so as to preserve a geographical environment suitable to it should the fates decree that the great Jugo-Slav, the Southern Slav community, should become united in a separate federation? We cannot, however, well take the problem of the Czechoslovakian independence into consideration without reference to the attitude and prospects of the Southern or Jugo-Slavs and the meaning of this great movement amongst the Slav races of Europe generally. Before dealing with the difficult proposition of cutting out a new state in the midst of Europe from the disrupted remains of Austria-Hungary, it is just as well to know exactly why we desire such a disruption and what good it will do us. It is a curious instance of the interlocking of national interests and problems which takes us from Hungary to Mesopotamia.

Recent war literature has gone far to enlighten map readers as to the real meaning and objective of

Pan-Germanism, and the advance already made towards its realization. We can readily conjecture the indefinite scope of German ambitions involving, as they did, Egypt and all that Egypt stands for in Africa, as well as Mesopotamia and the prospects of extension of German trade and German influence from Mesopotamia to the Far East. So far as both Egypt and Mesopotamia are concerned, these far-reaching schemes were dependent absolutely on the control of direct railway communication between Berlin and Damascus in one direction, and between Berlin and the Persian Gulf in another. The Egyptian scheme was practically within the grasp of Germany before war was declared. From Constantinople to Bir-es-Saba (Beersheba) on the Egyptian frontier nothing remained but the completion of some difficult railway construction in the Taurus and Amanus ranges to place an open line in German hands. On the Mesopotamian side there was the same difficulty, but there was nothing else to bar the realization of a port on the Persian Gulf, inasmuch as an agreement between ourselves and Germany was already complete which proposed to place the control of the line from Bagdad to Basra and Koweit in their hands. The chief obstacle which confronted Germany was not south of Constantinople, but in the geographical interposition of the Slav state of Serbia. For some 200 miles the highway passes through that country, and there is no other line of anything like equal geographical facility as that which passes by the valley of the Morava to Nish and Sofia. Serbia was, therefore, crushed for reasons which really in-

volved little special racial antagonism or state obligations to Austria-Hungary, but, primarily, for the purpose of opening out a military and commercial highway to the East which would include the practical domination of Constantinople. When Serbia was accordingly wiped out of the map, and the tunnels piercing the Taurus and Amanus ranges between Constantinople and Aleppo were completed, it might well seem (and it was indeed assumed by some distinguished writers) that the primary object of Pan-Germanism was achieved, and that nothing could prevent the attainment of the final purpose of massing German troops rapidly on the Egyptian frontier hereafter (with a full appreciation on the part of Germany of our national unreadiness for defence) or launching a fleet in the Persian Gulf. The assumption, however, was hardly correct as regards Mesopotamia, for our occupation of that country south of Bagdad (which now extends a considerable distance to the north of that city) deprived Germany of more of the coveted line (reckoned in distance) than she had stolen from Serbia. Germany is, as a matter of fact, farther from her great objective now than she was before the War. But the danger to Egypt still remains, and it will remain until Damascus follows Bagdad into the possession of the Allies. The occupation of Mesopotamia, however, even if followed by that of Syria, is not in itself a sufficient guarantee for peace and security against a possible recrudescence of Pan-Germanism. More than one method has been suggested for dealing with that menace, and undoubtedly the most effective is that of restoring the Slavonic

barrier, and thus driving a political and geographical wedge across the highway between Germany and Constantinople. Two distinct Slavonic states may thus be constituted. One of them is obligatory on the Allies as the sequel of victory. Serbia awaits reconstitution, whether within her own original boundaries or combined with other Slav provinces now under Austrian rule; and the other consists in a new Northern Slav state to include Czechs and Slovaks. Such a political redistribution of states represents the complete dismemberment of Austria-Hungary, and the transfer of some fifteen millions of people now under Austrian rule (and consequently available for the purpose of serving Germany with man power) to independence and political autonomy.

The Czechs and Slovaks together occupy a block of territory which extends westwards from the Carpathians for 450 miles to the borders of Bavaria. The average width of the territory which they occupy is, perhaps, 100 miles, but it narrows considerably a little to the west of the river March which flows through Moravia from the north to join the Danube at Pressburg and approximately divides the Czechs of Bohemia from the Slovaks of North Hungary. The Czechs who occupy all Central Bohemia with a fringe of Germans around them use the word Czech to designate the whole country of Bohemia, and the French have adopted this Slav designation. The Slovaks extend from the March River, approximately, through Northern Hungary to the Carpathians, so that ethnographically the Czecho-Slovak state (the New Bohemia) is bordered by Germans and Poles on

the north, east (Silesia being chiefly German), and west, and by Austro-Germans and Magyars on the south ; that is to say, that the new state would be in immediate contact with the Northern Slavs, Poles, and Ruthenes, but separated from the Southern Slavs (Croats and Serbs) by Eastern Austria and Hungary. The Germans and Magyars who form the ruling minority within the limits of Bohemia, Moravia, and Slovakia number less than a million and a half, Czechs and Slovaks together amounting to about eight and a half millions. In the province of Silesia, however, the Germans outnumber the Czechs by nearly two to one, which so far weakens the claim of nationality in regard to the inclusion of that province within the boundaries of the New Bohemia. Nothing can exceed the complexity of race distributions throughout Central Europe and the Near East, and the problem of disintegration of the racial elements intermingling on almost any borderland so as to set a definite hedge between them is practically impossible of solution. The will of the majority is the only criterion of future contentment and peace, and even that is no secure guarantee if the minority belong to a powerful and aggressive neighbouring kingdom, with a strong centrifugal force tending to expansion across all its borders in order to find room for a rapidly increasing population. Such are undoubtedly the conditions which will govern the existence of the New Bohemia, and nothing short of the closest possible union between the Czechs of the west and the Slovaks of Slovakia will secure their common interests against interference from the

German-speaking peoples who will face them on three-fourths of their frontiers. Although their dialects are different, there will be no language question to disturb the problem of the unity between Czechs and Slovaks. Each will use his own tongue freely, and the Slovaks especially will gain economically by a union which will remove Magyar restrictions on their development.

Opposition and friction will necessarily occur on the Czecho-German and Czecho-Austrian frontiers with the first attempts at reconstruction, nor will the Magyars be content with the severance of their northern provinces from the great body of Hungary. It is not easy to assess the political value of such opposition, which frequently exhibits itself in a virulent form so long as new boundaries are under discussion but which subsides marvellously when once an award has been made and the border folk turn to their habitual methods of life and social existence. It is often far more a matter of sentiment (patriotic or otherwise) than of practical interest, and, so long as the division of territory rests with a responsible tribunal animated by a genuine desire for the promotion of peace and contentment on either side the new border-line, and is not the result of military occupation of alien territory, local opposition soon subsides and international ill-feeling disappears. Thus, it is quite possible that the Magyars of Hungary would acquiesce in the separation of Slovakia with no great or lasting feeling of resentment. It is well enough known that the great mass of the Magyar people by no means follow their leaders, the Court

and aristocracy, in their strong pro-German proclivities. It does not follow, however, that the mass of the people would do otherwise than support their leaders in case of international interference of an aggressive description, but it might very well happen that with their own political severance from Austria they would be content to see the Slovaks of their north country enjoying the same principles of liberty which they surely desire themselves. It would, indeed, be no surprise if one of the ultimate results of this War was the formation of a Hungarian (Magyar) Republic.

The first great necessity for a newly organized self-governing state is a definite frontier and a boundary line which will not only set a limit to its territorial extension, but will protect it as far as possible from aggression. The boundary which is to be the visible sign of international separation will be of little value unless it is scientifically adjusted to the political, military, and economic needs of the country concerned. Its position will be based in the first instance on considerations of racial distribution and nationality, subject, of course, to the will of the peoples concerned. Seeing that this "will" does not at all necessarily coincide with racial dispositions, and is certainly not governed by any principles of community of origin and language, the best boundary will almost inevitably prove to be that which offers the best prospects of protection against aggression and interposes the greatest practical obstacle to indiscriminate expansion or burglarious irruption from either side. The boundary must be scientifically

adjusted to geographical distributions and features in order that it may be strong, on the old principle that the "strong man armed" is most capable of preserving peace in his home, a principle which is as sound now as ever it was.

The best geographical feature for the maintenance of a boundary is that of the mountain watershed, or divide, for it is more easily adapted to military defence (this has been proved over and over again in the present War), it is definite, and it is easily demarcated and maintained. There is no need to labour this contention. The point of it at present is that Bohemia has ever possessed an almost ideal mountain boundary on the German side of her, and that it would be a gross political blunder to disturb that arrangement in the interests of those Germans who have crossed the mountains and now interpose a fairly compact ring between the interior foothills of Bohemia and the central body of Czech population. It is naturally the German and Austrian frontiers of the New Bohemia that require the most careful consideration, and it is just here that Nature offers the kindest assistance. The territory of Bohemia amounts to about 20,000 square miles of the basin of the upper Elbe, and includes those of the Adler, Iser, the upper Moldau, and the Eger. The Böhmerwald divides it from Bavaria, the Erzgebirge and the Riesengebirge from Saxony and Silesia, and the Moravian hills from the basin of the Danube. So far it would seem to be one of the best-protected kingdoms in Europe. But these boundaries are defined by mountain features which are not of great altitude and are

crossed at many points by important routes. At the western extremity of Bohemia the loop of the boundary northward to include Asch in the Elster group of mountains covers two important passes from the German side into the head of the Eger valley, which itself forms a most useful lateral line of communication to the Elbe. This important valley is occupied chiefly by Germans at present, an occupation which cannot possibly be reconciled with any scheme for a defensive frontier. Between the Elster divide and the Elbe the boundary is carried by the Erz ranges, which form the northern rim of the Eger basin, and which are crossed by four passes from Saxony before reaching the gorge of the Elbe some forty miles above Dresden. After crossing the Elbe it becomes very irregular. First looping northward and plainsward to include Ramburg, it rises again to the Lausitzer ridge, and falls again to cross the upper Niesse (which breaks through the ranges) near Zittau, where it makes another wide loop towards the plains before rising to the Riesen divide. This loop includes Friedland and Neustadt at a considerable altitude, certainly not less than 3600 feet above sea and on the Riesen back it is as much as 5200 feet. All this is good boundary, although there are important crossings to be dealt with at Ramburg, Zittau, and Friedland. From the Riesen it continues to be an irregular, but fairly well-defined, mountain boundary along the northern frontier of Silesia, till it finally descends from the Reichminster by a small western affluent of the Oder to Troppau. Silesia being much more full of Germans than Czechs, it may well be

doubted whether this province would be any acquisition to the New Bohemia, whether it had not better form some concession to Germany for the sacrifice of German subjects in the Eger valley. Moreover, this northern boundary of Silesia is a bad boundary, scientifically, and the southern border of the province is far better adapted to serve a useful purpose than the northern, especially as Silesia is riddled and crossed by communication lines into Prussia which could only be commanded from the southern heights. These heights are an eastern continuation of the Sudetic system, and they reach to the divide between the Oder and the Danube. This is the well-known Moravian Gap, the focus of German railways west of Krakau. From here it again links up with the West Beskiden extension of the great Carpathian ranges. This, on the whole, and without close examination on the ground which would doubtless reveal certain defects in detail, appears to be a sound northern boundary for the Czecho-Slovakian state united and liberated as the New Bohemia. The Slovaks on the east occupy the northern provinces of Hungary, but do not extend southwards on the Carpathians beyond the river Ungvar, which, rising near the crest of the range, flows past the town of Ungvar to join the Theiss and, ultimately, the Danube. The river Ungvar, then, as far as the town (or rather the Carpathian spur which defines the southern rim of the Ungvar basin), may well represent the first link westward of the New Bohemian southern boundary. The sixteen countries of Slovakia, extending eastwards from Moravia to the Carpathians, and

forming the northern provinces of Hungary, offer a problem of some complexity on the southern side where they would be partitioned off from Magyar territory. On the north the boundary suggested coincides with the present boundary of Hungary and fulfils all ethnographical requirements, but on the south it would require an intimate knowledge of the line of country stretching from Ungvar in the Carpathian foothills to the great bend of the Danube below Buda-Pesth to determine a boundary which should satisfy both ethnographical requirements and fit those of the topographical distributions. No great ranges come to the rescue here. It is true that the whole of Northern Hungary is mountainous, but the crests of the ridges align themselves with much regularity in the wrong direction, their axis being usually from north to south, so that at first sight an east to west boundary, based on geographical considerations, seems bound to resolve itself into a succession of uplifts and depressions after the manner of a switchback. This is not altogether the case, however. The boundary heading westwards towards the Danube bend from Ungvar would first encounter a necessary depression to carry it across the Ungvar River some twenty miles above Ungvar. It could then find an excellent point for permanent and visible reference rising to the Vihorlat ridge, from which it must again descend to the flat plains through which two rivers drain southwards, the Laborcza and the Topoly, and both of them would have to be crossed. The latter river rises at the eastern foot of the Eperjes Takajiheg, running north and south.

Crossing this range and the eastern affluents of the Hernad at some point north of Kaschau (Kassa), it could again take to a series of mountain divides running to 6000 feet of altitude till it turned the heads of the eastern affluents of the Gram River, which it would cross, along with the railway, at a point west of Schemnitz. After crossing the Gram, a boundary which curved north-west by the divide to Nitra (Nitrya) and then followed the Nitra stream south to Komarun on the Danube, and subsequently the Danube to Pressburg, would probably include all the Czechs in that corner of Northern Hungary. At Pressburg we are in contact with the province of Lower Austria. To continue the Danubian boundary to its junction with the Moldau River and then to press that river into boundary service so as to include Lower Austria in the New Bohemia would be simple, but it would be politically inexpedient. Lower Austria is a German-speaking province, and Vienna would be placed directly on this new political boundary—a dangerous situation, inviting trouble hereafter, and in no way strengthening the Bohemian frontier. Lower Austria must remain Austrian, and the boundary must be carried to the north of that province and south of Moravia. This presents no really objectionable features on the score of geographical position whilst it solves the ethnographical problem; for the eastern boundary of Lower Austria, first following the March affluent of the Danube northwards from Pressburg and then striking westward to define the southern limits of Moravia, finds a suitable divide to carry it within reach of the flats and marshes of

the Lake region east of Budweis. Here it crosses the lowlands to the foot of the eastern spurs of the Böhmerwald, which great mountain system, rising to altitudes of from 3000 to 4000 feet, carries it triumphantly to the one original starting-point at the head of the Eger. Along the entire length of this southern frontier of New Bohemia (some 500 miles) the boundary is traversed at intervals by important rivers and by many lines of approach. Such mighty contributions to the volume of the Danube as must flow through the valleys of the Moldau, the March, the Vag, and the Theiss (with its fan-like expansion of smaller contributory affluents from Slovakia) cannot fail to open the way to aggression from the south unless safeguarded by military artifices. But the south is represented by Austria-Hungary throughout, and whilst Austria-Hungary will be dovetailed between two great Slav states—a New Bohemia and a New Serbia—the New Bohemia will be directly backed by a new Poland (possibly including Galicia) and also possibly by Russia beyond. In short, the strategic position of Austria-Hungary will be so weak that aggression need hardly be anticipated. With the Southern Slav federation (the union of Croats and Serbians) a powerful support will be given to the political status of the Slav, and the long-standing anachronism of Slav subservience to Teutons and Magyars should finally disappear.

CHAPTER IV

A JUGO-SLAV FEDERATION

PERHAPS the greatest amongst other political redistributions contemplated by "after the War" politicians as within the compass of European statecraft is that of a federation of all the Southern Slav states into one great Jugo-Slav nationality, which may be powerful as a future bulwark against German aggression in South-Eastern Europe. Were Slovenes, Croats, and Serbians united in the bonds of state federation, they would surely form a nationality strong enough to claim first rank amongst the powers of Middle Europe—powerful enough to face any possible Germanic combination. It takes a little time to grasp the full significance of such an addition to the nations. Both in population and in extent of territory it would be so formidable as to create a totally new political outlook in Central and Eastern Europe.

The Slovenes, who by blood, language, and tradition are one with the Croats and Serbs, holding the same aims and ideals in their national life, occupy the most westerly of the Jugo-Slav provinces, and

are consequently most exposed to German aggression. They have thus formed an ethnical barrier behind which Croats, Serbs, and Montenegrins have been able to develop their national character and constitutions in comparative security since the Middle Ages, whilst they have themselves been victimized by Teutonic methods. Amongst the Slovenes the Slav democratic ideal still holds its own in spite of drastic methods of repression, and they look to the end of this long and terrible War to decide their fate. They maintain a racial majority throughout a wide extent of territory, which includes some of the most beautiful country in Mid-Europe. In the Austrian provinces of Styria, Carniola, Carinthia, Goritz-Gradiska, Istria, and in the basin of the Isonzo they are to be found, but they do not altogether maintain their majority on the Italian frontier. Being thus wedged in between Italy, Austria, and Germany, they form a barrier between Germany and the Adriatic.

Together with the Czechs of Bohemia, who belong to the Northern Slav group, the Slovenes are the most advanced in Western civilization of all the Slav nationalities, forming a link between East and West which will have the effect hereafter of blending Slav ideals and social aspirations with those of the Latin and Anglo-Saxon races.

Beyond the Slovenes, reaching south-eastwards to Albania, Greece, and the Ægean Sea, including all the Adriatic coast north of Albania, are Dalmatians, Montenegrins, Croats, and Serbs, constituting the chief elements of the Jugo-Slav communities. Jugo-Slavia thus extends from the northern rim of the

Save River (Slavonia) basin and the valley of the Danube to the southern borders of Serbia, and within that extent of territory the Slav element amounts to 90 per cent of the population. To the north of the Danube, between Slavonia and Rumania as far east as the province of Banat, the Jugo-Slav population is scattered and mixed—so much so that it probably no longer represents the majority of the people; but if we reckon with the whole Slav area it represents immense potential strength both politically and economically. From the Isonzo frontier to the southern limits of Serbia is not less than 500 miles, whilst between the Adriatic and the northern and eastern claims of Slavdom is an average width of about 150 miles; so that we reckon with a territory amounting to at least 75,000 square miles, or nearly as large as England and Scotland together and about two-thirds the size of Italy. Within these limits there are approximately five millions of Jugo-Slavs in Serbia and Montenegro, seven millions in the Austro-Hungarian provinces, and forty thousand in the Italian districts west of Goritza. About a million and a half are overseas emigrants. These figures must be regarded as very approximate, there being no really trustworthy statistics, but they are sufficient to show that the constitution of a homogeneous Jugo-Slav state would transfer some eight millions of people from Germanic rule to independence, and constitute a formidable barrier to German extension towards the Adriatic and Aegean Seas. If we are to be assured of the blessing of peace amongst the nations after the War,

it can only be by curtailing German aggression with every natural and national obstacle that can be placed in her way ; it is only by regulating the balance of power between the Teuton and the Slav that a really comprehensive check to Pan-German aspirations in the Near East can be secured. Owing to the geographical fact that the Anglo-Saxon element of repression will still be too far removed for direct practical effort in the Balkan region, we must assume that it is only by the encouragement of Slav combination that physical opposition of adequate strength can be brought into action.

From the days of Charlemagne have the Slovenes been fighting Germany for the right to live with a language of their own and a national chance of civil and social development. And yet very little was known about them before the War. It is this world War which has brought the Slovenes once again into prominence as a political factor in the re-making of Europe. Now is their opportunity, and the end of the struggle will settle their fate. The Slav languages in Austria are allied closely to each other and to the Russian tongue, but they have never been studied by German overlords, in spite of the fact that they possess quite an important literature of their own and that the Slav languages generally are spoken over one-sixth of the inhabited world. Twelve hundred years ago the Northern Slavs of Bohemia and Hungary were geographically linked up with the Southern Slavs, the Slovene lands bordering Czech territory touched both on the north-west and on the north-east. No intervention of Magyar origin

then separated Bohemia from the Jugo-Slavs, and the united Slav state occupied a powerful position in Central Europe. Unfortunately, the Slovenes neglected to guard their lowland frontiers, and the enemy gradually thrust his way in, splitting the Slav dominions into two parts with a Magyar wedge. The gradual domination of Southern Slav land does not appear to be due to any war of conquest. For the last few hundred years Germans and Magyars have weighed heavily on the Slovene borders, and by sheer weight of numbers have gradually ousted the Slavs from the outer northern and western borders of their inheritance. Yet still, as we have already shown, the Jugo-Slav majority maintains itself in a space of territory so large that it could be rendered absolutely capable of holding its own against all outside aggression were it once consolidated into a national whole. The fighting quality of the Slav races has been well illustrated in this War. The Serbians, gradually outweighed in guns and men, have nevertheless put up a glorious fight for liberty, and have not only proved themselves better men in the field than the Austrians, but have evinced a tenacity of purpose and a power of recuperation which has amazed their Allies. No fear need be entertained for the future of a Jugo-Slav nationality with well-protected frontiers. But it is obviously far beyond the powers of any international political convention that may be formed after the War to assure to the Jugo-Slavs the whole of that great territory in which they claim to maintain a majority of the population. The linguistic boundary of the

Slovenes in the north includes the Crown lands of Carinthia, Styria, Carniola, and the seaboard of Austrian Illyria. The Mur and the Drave rivers bound it on the north, the Isonzo on the west, the Adriatic on the south, and the eastern frontiers of Croatia on the east. It thus includes a good slice of Italy and a considerable part of Western Hungary. Within its wide extended borders is to be found a much varied landscape and some of the most interesting and most picturesque scenery of Central Europe. All the grandeur and beauty of the Alpine world pervades the northern districts ; Carinthian forests spread themselves over the central hills ; while Styria, said to be one of the richest vine-growing districts of Europe, possesses all the charm of a sun-warmed, glowing landscape, with vineyards gracing the slopes of undulating hills. These continue in bands of cultivated loveliness into the borderland of Croatia. On the west the Julian Alps and the Karst (Carso) heights represent a wild and rugged country overlooking Gradiska and the Istrian coast ; and we hear of a "strange dark world of giant caves" hidden in the rockbound recesses of the Carso, which add new features of interest to the explorer and new difficulties to the invader, who can overlook Trieste after he has stormed his way upwards from the vine-growing flats of Goritza. It is here that the Slovenes claim to have originally developed their national energy and imbibed the spirit of patriotism which animates them.

With the union of the Serbo-Croats, Bosnians, and Montenegrins the Jugo-Slav nationality would extend

to the meridian of Salonika on the east from that of Venice on the west. Serbia presents a combination of physical features which differs from that of the more northern provinces of Jugo-Slav occupation. It is throughout a land of mountains, but with no very important ranges of high altitude and no world-famous peaks. The elevation of the much-wrinkled surface of Serbia is greater towards the east than on the west, and its eastern boundary is a strong international barrier against Bulgaria based in the north on the great divide between the Morava and the Danube (after leaving the Timok tributary of that river), and carried southward by the Vidlich, the Tarkvena, and the Kale Tepesi ranges, which are high enough and rugged enough to form a very effective wall of international protection. On the whole, it is a boundary strong for purpose of defence, conspicuous and impressive. No better boundary could be found either east or west of it. It is beyond the Vidlich, at the head of the Nishava tributary of the Morava, that the railway from Belgrade to Sofia crosses the great divide. Nish is situated on the Nishava, not far from its junction with the Morava. The one geographical feature of primary political importance in Serbia is this comparatively narrow valley of the Morava. It might appear to have been designed by Nature for the express purpose of affording the opportunity for a line of railway from Berlin to Belgrade, Sofia, and Constantinople. Although not more than 200 miles of Serbian territory is thus traversed between Belgrade and the Bulgarian frontier, it may be doubted whether any 200 miles

of railway elsewhere in Europe is of such primary political significance. Serbia is divided into two great river basins, that of the Morava and that of the Vardar, the Morava basin on the north being about twice the size of that of the Vardar on the south. The divide between them is marked by the hills of Shar Dagh, which strike north-eastwards from the borders of Albania, overlooking the sources of the Drin, towards Nish on the Belgrade-Sofia railway. The upland basin of Kossovo, buttressed on the south by the Shar Dagh, is reached from the south by the railway which follows the Vardar valley northward from Salonika. It forms an important topographical and historical feature in Serbia, lying, as it does, just on the eastern border of Montenegro where Montenegro adjoins Albania, and being connected southwards by the White Drin and the Black Drin with Lake Ochrida. Ochrida marks the tri-junction of Serbia, Greece, and Albania, and heads the only road by which Serbia can reach the Albanian coast at Durazzo. The White Drin and the Black Drin are the two chief affluents (draining south and north respectively) of the Drin, which crosses Albania and finds its exit into the Adriatic below Skutari. From Nish to the Kossovo plain, and from that plain by the Drin affluents to Ochrida and the Albanian coast, has been marked as the line of a projected railway.

Kossovo (or "the plain of the blackbird," as it appears in German maps) is the historic battle-ground of Serbia, and is, probably, the most extensive area of comparatively open ground in that country. The

Kossovo uplands form a part of the upper basin of the Ibar (chief tributary of the Morava) and cover the low, marshy divide which separates the Ibar from the Vardar. The nature of this divide suggests that it may once have formed the head of an inlet of that northern sea basin which covered Hungary. Here, at any rate, are always to be found the best corn-producing lands. It is probable that pasturage or woodland bordered the steep southern shores of that ancient inlet, so that the Kossovo region (not long ago part of the old Turkish Sandjak of Novobazar), with the plains about Uskub and Monastir (also included before the last Balkan war in Turkish Macedonia), are most important geographical factors in the configuration of the country, and quite the best asset which war has brought to Serbia. The Vardar basin is corrugated throughout by mountains, intersected by valleys which open out into sheltered but restricted plains here and there, such as those which support Monastir on the extreme south, or Uskub, which marks the junction of the railways from Nish and Salonika near the head of the Morava and Vardar rivers. The north-western districts of Serbia bordering Austria and Montenegro are as mountainous in character as the rest of the country. The mountains cluster about the basin of the Morava Ibar, the most important tributary of the Morava. The Morava Ibar valley gives opportunity for a railway line from Nish, reaching westward towards the Austrian frontier (*i.e.* Bosnia), but does not actually reach the frontier.

From this cursory description of the geographical

conformation of Serbia the two obvious considerations which most affect that country's future are, firstly, that the north-eastern corner embracing the Morava valley is politically the most important. It is that corner which Bulgaria (under Germany) is resolved to keep at any price ; nor need we imagine that any Utopian scheme of a peace which admits of no annexations will affect that resolution. As the high road from Berlin to Sofia, the retention of it means the success of the German objective in this War, the triumph of Central Europe. The Dobrudja and Macedonia are equally claimed by Bulgaria, but it is probable that Dobrudja and Macedonia together would not weigh in the balance against the political triumph of a Morava valley annexation. Independently of the political aspect of the question, there are large economic interests in this part of Serbia. Gold, copper, lead, and coal render it a rich mining country with a splendid prospect of future wealth when scientifically exploited. Thus it may be taken for granted that the Morava valley, and neither Macedonia nor the Dobrudja, will be regarded as the crux of any peaceful settlement with Bulgaria. The confederation of Serbia with the Slav races that lie between her north-western borders and the Isonzo River, with Bosnia, Dalmatia, Croatia, Slavonia, and the smaller provinces occupied by a large Slovene population (including Istria), would result not merely in the dismemberment of Austria, but the creation of a Slav kingdom or commonwealth, which in itself would be as powerful as Austria, and, combined with the separation of the Northern Slavs, the Czechs

and Slovaks, would reduce Austria to the position of a German dependency.

Such a result may be the aspiration of Slav propagandists and the secret hope of those who earnestly desire to see not only Prussian militarism destroyed, but the German nationality reduced to provincial insignificance. But, as a whole, it is hardly a reasonable hope. Even the discussion of it may involve considerations which must inevitably lead to more international bitterness than is at all suitable to the ideal of permanent European peace. Italy will have her say, and a very considerable say, in the matter. It is unbelievable that Italy should acquiesce in a policy of "no annexation" which would deprive her either of the "Italia irredenta" of the Trentino, or of the valley of the Isonzo and Trieste. Neither justice nor humanity could demand that Italy should be content with the *status quo ante* for the sake of supporting the "national" ideal which we are told must be the basis of all international redistributions. Redistributions of international territories there certainly *must* be, and it is mere juggling with words to decline to recognize that redistribution implies annexation. The anxious attempt to discriminate between them does not seem to me to be worth the impressive oratory and the keen discussion which has occupied Parliament for so long. Italy will surely claim the Isonzo valley and Istria, nor can there be much doubt that a further claim to the complete domination of the Adriatic, which could only be attained by the occupation of points on the Dalmatian coast and of a port (Avlona) safeguarding

the Straits of Otranto, will be strongly contested. In the Isonzo district the Slovene population, although considerable, is not in the majority. The "national" basis for a settlement in favour of Italy need not be seriously impaired, and we may, I hope, with a successful termination of the War, assume that Italy will at least claim Trieste. As regards Dalmatia, there may be strong differences of opinion and stout opposition ; and yet Dalmatia occupies a geographical position which favours its command from the sea rather than from the land. Dalmatia is separated from Bosnia by the great wall of the Dinaric Alps, five or six thousand feet of almost impassable natural barrier which cuts off communication with the interior and leaves only the open ports of the seacoast, Zara, Ragusa, etc. (ports which are cosmopolitan rather than Jugo-Slav), as the gateways of communication with the outer world. They serve little or no commercial purpose in the interests of Bosnian trade, and they are in effect more Italian than Bosnian. But if Dalmatia were held by Italy in addition to Istria, etc., there would undoubtedly be serious inroads made on that ideal of nationalism which is rightly to be reckoned as the basis of inter-territorial agreements, but which, like other great principles, may be found to be occasionally impracticable. In the Goritza-Gradiska region there are said to be 155,000 Jugo-Slavs, 70,000 in Trieste, 225,000 in Istria, and 610,000 in Dalmatia, where 90 per cent of the population are Jugo-Slav. Thus no less than a million Jugo-Slav peoples would be transferred to Italian domination, and of these alien

communities more than half would be Dalmatian. There seems to be no reason from either the geographical or ethnical point of view for any interference with the independence of Dalmatia unless a strong and determined expression of will on the part of the Dalmatians themselves should unite them to a Jugo-Slav kingdom. Montenegro would certainly declare her adherence to that nationality whose strenuous resistance to Austrian domination she has shared with such disastrous results to herself, if she resigned her independence at all, but it is by no means to be assumed that because Dalmatia and Montenegro are both ethnically allied to the Jugo-Slav family they would willingly consent to become minor states in one united federation of all those countries which claimed unity of racial origin. For Albania—who within the last five years has been subject to the encroachments of Turks, Montenegrins, Serbs, Greeks, Bulgarians, and Austrians, whose ancient Illyrian peoples hold themselves aloof from all their neighbours of less illustrious origin, and whose sufferings call for our deepest sympathy—at present we can but hope for a brighter future under a stronger and more liberal government than that which was imposed on her after the Balkan Wars of 1912–13 (in which she remained neutral), when an incompetent German prince was sent to set up a small imitation German Court at Durazzo. Historically there has always been a certain manifestation of international good-will between Albania and Italy. Albanians have not forgotten the greatness of their country under Roman rule, and there are Albanian colonies

in Italy to this day, so that the political aspiration of Albania would undoubtedly gravitate far more towards a trans-Adriatic alliance, which would give Italy command of the Adriatic Sea, than towards a political alliance with any form of Jugo-Slav national combination.¹ This is important, for an independent Albania cuts off all Southern Serbia from free communication with the Adriatic. The eastern boundaries of Albania are remarkably strong both on the frontiers of Greece and Serbia. Excepting where they touch the lake regions of Ochrida, they follow the crests of well-defined mountain ranges where are cradled the sources of the many rivers which intersect the country from east to west. The connection between the coast and inland regions is naturally shaped by these river valleys. The river Boyana, which opens up the way to Skutari and the lake of the same name in Montenegro, is of more geographical and commercial importance to Montenegro than it is to Albania. The road from Durazzo on the coast to the Ochrida Lake on the Serbian border following the valley of the Skumbi River and the ancient Via Egnatia (which once connected Durazzo with Salonika) is perhaps the chief line of communication in a country which is curiously undeveloped in the matter of communications. Neither of them are of much use as commercial highways to Serbia. There will be more to be said about Albania in connection with Greece. Geographical environment gives to Montenegro that power of independence which has ever distinguished her most warlike people. Her

¹ Since this was written Italy has declared a protectorate over Albania.

army only musters between 30,000 and 40,000 men, but the fierce and half-barbaric character of the Montenegrin combines with his savage mountain country to preserve the isolation and freedom for which Montenegro is famous in European annals. Montenegro may ally herself with Serbs of cognate origin, but will hardly consent to figure as a minor state.

Montenegro holds the sources of many rivers which rise amidst the fastnesses of its rugged hills, and possesses little open grasslands except in the Dormitor region and about Niksh and Podgoritza. Its highest mountains (running to about 8000 feet of altitude) are amongst the Dormitor group. Northward from the central hills flow tributaries to the Save and Danube. The most easterly of these tributaries, the Lim, rises on the Albanian frontier and intersects Montenegro from south to north. Eastwards the Ibar makes its way to the historical plains of Kossovo in Serbia, and so to the Morava. It is the passage of these rivers through the mountain walls of Montenegro which forms the only weakness in that barrier. From the same central group of hills, streams run south to the Rieka inlet of Lake Skutari, half of which lake is Montenegrin and half Albanian—an arrangement not calculated to promote international harmony.

The Montenegrin-Dalmatian boundary, which by leaving a comparatively narrow strip of mountainous seaboard to Dalmatia in order to secure to that country the mouths of the Cattaro and the railway terminus of Castelnuovo, cuts off Montenegro from

connection with the coast at Cattaro or Spizza (which was occupied by Austria the instant that the boundaries were determined in Berlin in 1878), and is a weak extension which not only has been detrimental to the commercial interests of Montenegro, but practically gave the Austrians the command of Cettinje, its capital, during the War by approach from the sea, Cettinje being close under the boundary. The seaport of Montenegro is Antivari, from whence a mountain road runs to Rieka and Cettinje. This apparently is the only road from the coast which is entirely within Montenegrin territory. The river Boyana, which is in part the boundary between Montenegro and Albania, is navigable from the sea to Rieka through the lake. There is also a direct road starting through Austrian (Dalmatian) territory and crossing the boundary from Cattaro to Cettinje, which continues to Podgoritzza and Niksh: The fatal weakness in the Montenegrin boundaries, which are otherwise sound enough, is this western coast extension from Cattaro to Spizza, both of which ports geographically belong to Montenegro. The boundary should touch the sea near Castelnuovo at the Boche de Cattaro if any respect is paid to the natural defences of Montenegro.

The federation, then, of Jugo-Slav states powerful enough to resist German aggression will probably (if it takes political shape at all) resolve itself into the following combination : Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Dalmatia, Croatia, Southern Styria, Southern Carinthia, with possibly a part of Carniola, and the Austro-Hungarian provinces south of the

Drave (Slavonia and Syrmia) may combine to form a single nationality ethnically homogeneous, inspired with the same ideals and principles of national development, and protected by frontiers and boundaries which may secure the respect of all contiguous states. But these frontiers and boundaries, to be scientifically effective, must differ somewhat from those which at present define their political limits. To the east and west of this new and far extended nationality, existing boundaries, based as they are on strong mountain features, seem to fulfil those important conditions which well-considered and scientifically adjusted boundaries are called on to maintain. It is to the north and the south that political attention will have to be directed. On the south it seems unreasonable that Serbia should be dispossessed of the only access to the sea which is open to her. The whole basin of the Vardar, and not merely a part of it, should belong to Serbia if she is to develop her commercial resources successfully without interference. Serbia's position with regard to foreign trade, as it stood with her pre-war boundaries, was almost disastrous. To the west, *i.e.* towards the Adriatic, there was practically no trade outlet whatsoever. To the south she could only make use of the Ægean port of Salonika as long as she remained on good terms with Greece; and the prospect of a permanent understanding between any two Balkan States is not one on which to base vital commercial interests. It is at best precarious. To the north and east she had the right of Danube navigation to the Black Sea and the Dardanelles, but it

was a right which was entirely at the mercy of two other Balkan States, Rumania and Bulgaria, either of which could readily block Serbia's way to the Black Sea, to say nothing of Turkey with the command of the Dardanelles. In short, Serbia was shut off from the outer world more completely than any state in Europe, and was reduced to a position of absolute dependence on the good-will of her neighbours. It is inconceivable that a greater Serbia, the premier state in a Jugo-Slav federation such as has been indicated, could be satisfied with such a position, for it must be conceded that the federation would effect little to help the development of Serbian trade by the provision of new commercial outlets. Salonika must surely become a Serbian port, with as much of the adjoining Macedonian territory as will ensure its protection. The new boundary should enclose the whole basin of the Bisistra, starting from the Grammos peaks on the Albanian frontier and following the great southern divide to the sea in the Gulf of Salonika. To the east of this new development the new boundary should start from the present tri-junction of Serbia, Bulgaria, and Greece, and should follow the eastern rim of the basins of the Struma and Mesta to the present boundary between Greece and Bulgaria, giving Serres and Kavalla to the new Serbia. This would dispose of the interests of Greece in Macedonia. As for ethnical unity in Macedonia as the "basis of nationality," it is not to be found there; for the "Macedoine" population is so mixed as to be beyond any principle of homogeneous nationality whatever. To the north of this

new Jugo-Slav federation it is not so easy to define the boundaries with Italy and Germany. The river Drave from near its source to the Danube is almost an ideal ethnical division with Germany, and, in the absence of any other natural feature, most likely to be useful ; it may be accepted provisionally, but from the head of the Drave southward the boundary which defines the Italian frontier will not readily be adjusted, and may well arouse international discussion. The western boundary of Carniola, which runs from Fiume northwards to the Italian Alps, and from the neighbourhood of the Predil Pass could be carried direct to a junction with the Drave, appears on the face of the map to be well defined, and is probably the best boundary based on strong natural features that can be suggested. It leaves to Italy all the coast land and Istria. Italy might claim Fiume and the Archipelago islands between Fiume and the northern coast of Dalmatia, but she would in that case occupy the one Adriatic port which is open to the northern provinces of the proposed Jugo-Slav federation. The Slav population of Dalmatia would undoubtedly resent annexation, although in the interests of naval security and mastership of the Adriatic strong reasons could be adduced for this maritime province (cut off by the wall of the Dinaric Alps from communication with the rest of the Jugo-Slav states) to become at least an Italian protectorate.

From the junction of the Drave River with the Danube to the Iron Gates the Danube would be the northern boundary of the Slav federation. It is not an ideal boundary ; no open river can be so ; but

at least the astounding political weakness which placed Belgrade the capital of Serbia on the river almost astride of the boundary can be avoided in future, and a new capital more secure from aggression, if less convenient for communication with the outside world, can be found at Nish or elsewhere in the interior.

CHAPTER V

BULGARIA

FROM the geographical point of view the position of Bulgaria amongst the Balkan States is exceptionally strong. Her four-square boundary (for Bulgaria is nearly quadrilateral) renders her territorially compact, with great power of military concentration. On the north rolls the mighty Danube, not by any means impassable, but nevertheless an important natural defensive feature, and the only boundary weakness existing in the long line of the Bulgarian frontier is to be found in the artificial line which connects the Danube below Rustchuk with the Black Sea above Varna. This boundary Bulgaria is now endeavouring to rectify by the occupation of the Dobrudja, and with the extension of Bulgarian territory to the mouth of the Danube this weakness would disappear. The eastern boundary from the Black Sea to the *Æ*gean is chiefly a river boundary. From the sea to the ridges of the Sistranja Balkans facing the Black Sea it is defined by a river, but the river is exceptionally well protected by hills; and again from Mustafa Pasha north-west of Adrianople

to the sea it follows the Maritza River (under a recent concession of the Turks) to the *Ægean* near Enos.

On the south the coast of the *Ægean* Sea between Enos and the Greek frontier is singularly devoid of good harbours and ports. Those that exist offer inferior accommodation to shipping, and, owing to the coast formation, which presents but a narrow shelf at the foot of rugged and mostly barren mountains overlooking the southern shores, there is little opportunity for easy access to the central valleys from the sea. The port of Dede Agach in Bulgaria, about seventy miles to the west of the mouth of the Maritza River, is connected by rail with the lower Maritza valley, and, following that valley, the railway now runs without traversing Turkish territory to the fertile plains of Philippopolis, north of the Eastern Rhodope. This has become a most important outlet for Bulgarian trade since all territory west of the Maritza has been ceded by Turkey to Bulgaria; but the next port on the coast, Porto Lagos, has no interior communication at all, although a line is apparently contemplated which is to connect it with the upper Maritza valley after crossing the Rhodope range. If, or when, this is completed, Bulgaria will possess two outlets to the *Ægean* from the interior, and her aspirations after a third port at Kavalla are hardly justified. Dede Agach is also a wayside port for a line which, running from west to east through Greece, Bulgaria, and Turkey, connects Salonika with Constantinople, but it is not directly on that line, being connected by a short branch from Bodoma Makri. It probably gains little commercially

from the connection. With the additional territory which the annexation of Serres and Kavalla would ensure, there would be an accession of traffic due to the opening up of the Struma valley on the west of Bulgaria, and this, with the rich produce of Serres, would justify an extension of the railway to Kavalla—a far better natural outlet than Dede Agach. Kavalla would then, undoubtedly, become the chief seaport of Bulgaria. Should Serbia ever realize her aspirations for a highway to the *Æ*gean and round off her obvious geographical claims by the occupation of the whole basin of the Vardar and attain Salonika as her chief sea outlet, the high watershed between the Struma and the Vardar would become the natural line of partition between Serbia and Bulgaria, and these two quarrelsome states would have arrived at something like a geographical equilibrium, which might greatly assist in preserving future peace between them. Unfortunately such a condition of equilibrium is only to be obtained at the expense of Greece, and, although it may be said that the extension of the Grecian frontier from Salonika eastwards is geographically unsound and unscientific, offering every opportunity for future trouble with both Serbia and Bulgaria, without adequate compensation from either the commercial or ethnical point of view, it is highly improbable that any such equilibrium between them will be found for political reasons. We can only note that, on the question of racial affinities, Greece has little, if any, more claim to Southern Macedonia than Serbia, for the population of Macedonia is notoriously an amalgam of many nationalities, whilst

geographically her already extensive seaboard gives her no claim for further sea outlets. Undoubtedly, a compact Greece, separated by strong defensive boundaries from a compact Serbia and an equally compact Bulgaria, would be the surest guarantee for peace that can be attained in this cockpit of the Near East. Here, indeed, lies the crux of the whole Balkan situation. The solution of this most troublesome political problem will, probably, not depend on geographical issues, nor does it appear that it can be co-ordinated with geographical interests. We may, however, put forward a general statement of such points as will affect the questions of boundary distribution eventually. When all is said and done, Bulgaria will inevitably be a powerful factor in any future Balkan settlement. That is assured to her by her geographical predominance and her potential wealth. Bulgaria is a country of splendid promise, where mountains and valleys alternate in almost rhythmical order; where nature has decreed a fairly equable climate, with a good rainfall, a hot summer, and a cold winter. Right athwart the country from east to west runs the line of the Balkans, not lofty nor distinguished by important peaks, and by no means offering the strongest characteristics of a mountain barrier. The passes across the Balkans are generally easy and somewhat flat; the famous Shipka Pass (the scene of the gallant defence of Turkey against the Russian advance) is but a smooth road, running between the softly rounded summits on either side. Northward, long and gentle spurs spread down to the Danube, but these spurs are

intersected by rifted watercourses across which communications are difficult. There is a fair amount of fertility in this land of woods and meadows, but there is also a general want of water. To the south the Balkans fall steeply to the narrow lateral valley which lies between these foothills and a southern range (the Anti-Balkans), which separates this lateral depression from the plains widening to the higher Rhodope mountains. Both the inter-Balkan valley and the wider valley to the south are rich in agriculture and all that agriculture brings with it. The roses of Kazanlik are said to perfume the cornlands and the vineyards of the northern valley, whilst the southern valley, which embraces the course of the Upper Maritza and centres on Philippopolis, contains that great world highway which has seen the in-swarming of so many invading hosts in the past, and was designed to link together Berlin and Egypt, via Constantinople, in the near future. It is a lovely garden-country, wanting but the security of strong frontiers and good boundaries to develop, under a peace-loving and peace-cultivating government, into a great nationality. Bulgaria has, however, yet to determine her boundaries. The geographical position of the capital town of Bulgaria—Sofia—would appear at first sight to be too far to the west and too near to the boundary with Serbia to render it an effective centre for the administration of so large a country. Philippopolis undoubtedly claims pre-eminence in regard to position, being on the banks of the Maritza and in the centre of economic development. Sofia possesses, however, a remarkable command of com-

munications. The city stands at a nodal point of the Western Balkans, from which all the chief rivers of Bulgaria radiate outwards. Not far to the north-west, on the further slopes of the Mala mountains, where crossed by the Dragoman Pass, rises the Nishava, the river of Nish (in Serbia), which breaks through the boundary ridge of the Vidlich at Tzari-brod and determines the line of the great railway to Constantinople. The meaning of this divergence from the main divide between Serbia and Bulgaria—*i.e.* between the Nishava and the Bulgarian Isker—which appears to be a defect in an otherwise strong boundary, is doubtless strategic. It removes Sofia from the near neighbourhood of the Serbian frontier. Northward from Sofia flows the Isker to the Danube, defining the line of railway which finally diverges to Vidin on the extreme north-west and to Plevna and Varnar on the extreme north-east. Southward runs the Struma to the Ægean, between Salonika and Kavalla, but determining no line of railway further than the Serbian frontier. About fifty miles to the south-east of Sofia are gathered all the early waters of the great Maritza, which, although unnavigable above Adrianople, still points the great highway to Turkey. Thus Sofia commands a strategical position which is all-important, and which is only half discounted by its altitude and the consequent severity of its winter climate. It is obvious that the future commercial and economic interests of Bulgaria greatly centre in the important station of the Berlin-Constantinople line, with all the advantage of through traffic along a European highway. This promising

prospect was one which no other European Power than Germany could possibly offer. A comprehensive Pan-German extension, which should incorporate Bulgaria as an independent protectorate and ultimately bring into that country the wealth of the East as well as that of the West, was a bait to hang before the greedy eyes of a Germanized Court which proved irresistible. What had the Entente Powers to offer in comparison with such visions of future wealth and power? Comparatively nothing. What had they done to help Bulgaria in the hour of adversity when the Treaty of Bucharest closed the account of the last great Balkan War in 1913 and left her shorn of the greater part of the fruits of hard-won victory over Turkey? We must remember that it was Bulgaria who started the crusade on behalf of the Christian provinces of Turkey in 1912, and it was a well-prepared and hard-fighting Bulgaria that took the field. Every male Bulgarian is trained to the use of arms, and, being a soldier, accepts the standards of a soldier's honour. The Bulgarian people had made up their minds to undertake the greater share of the work before them, and they expected the greater part of the spoils. Turkey was invaded along two lines, by the railway to Constantinople from Adrianople, and by the passes of the northern mountains to Kerke Kiliss. It was this second line of advance which was chiefly responsible for Bulgarian victories. After surprising Kerke Kiliss, the Bulgarians forced a decisive battle at Lule Burgas, and, had they been able to pursue the routed Turks with vigour after the battle, they would undoubtedly have reached

Constantinople. But they were exhausted, and the Turks made a successful stand at Chatalja. Then cholera decimated the Bulgarian ranks, and they got no further. Bulgarian strategy at first was good, but there seems to have been a serious error in pushing forward southward of Adrianople without waiting to take that fortress. It dominated their line of communication with Chatalja and prevented the supplies of ammunition from reaching the front. It was the indomitable spirit of the Bulgarian peasant soldier, his hardness, and his bravery that was chiefly responsible for the defeat of the Turks (who are notoriously hard to beat when on the defensive), and so nearly led to the capture of Constantinople. However, the net result of all this great success, resulting from a vast expenditure of blood and treasures, was to let Serbia and Greece into the Macedonian conflict subsequently on comparatively easy terms. By a treaty previous to the 1912-13 war between Serbia and Bulgaria, Northern Macedonia was to become Serbian property when the Turks were disposed of. Southern Macedonia (including Monastir) was to become Bulgarian, whilst an intermediate zone (including Uskub) was apparently to be held up for further adjudication. Such a treaty was bound to lead to complications, and the result was unfortunate for Bulgaria. Greece, by the Treaty of Bucharest, extended her already immensely long coast-line eastwards on the Ægean shores and blocked Serbia from an outlet at Salonika. Bulgaria, finally (after a distinctly treacherous attack on Serbia), lost all the disputed area in Macedonia as well as a large

tract south-east of it, together with the lower Struma valley, the port of Kavalla and Serres. The Turks sneaked back into Adrianople, which had been finally captured by Bulgaria, and, to complete her misfortunes, Rumania stepped in and acquired territory beyond the Danube, which gave her two ports on the Dobrudja coast. Such was the result of a victorious war in which the Bulgarian army had exhibited magnificent military capacity. Naturally they nursed a grievance. No one was satisfied. Serbia has no available port either on the Adriatic or the Ægean ; Bulgaria was frankly despoiled of very nearly all she had gained. Greece was unhappy because she could not annex Epirus, and Albania became a sort of comic opera state under a German prince. There need be little surprise that Bulgaria now demands Greek Macedonia, all old Serbia, the Morava valley, and the Dobrudja complete.

If the object of a final treaty ratified by Great Powers is to settle international contentions and promote the future peace of the world by fair and just redistribution of territory, then the Treaty of Bucharest may be said to have been a signal failure. The great criterion of the success of such treaties is the contentment of the belligerent parties concerned, and, if all cannot be satisfied, the alternative is to please the majority in the strongest position and to recognize the claims of hard-won victory. No country in the world would have accepted the position into which Bulgaria was forced without a real (if unexpressed) determination to achieve *revanche* on the first opportunity. The effect of

the treaty was to sow the seeds of another war. We may condemn certain acts of treachery, of which Bulgaria was undoubtedly guilty, towards Serbia, but we must remember that there is nothing to choose in the matter of political morality, or the suppressed existence of a strain of savage barbarity, between Greek or Serbian, Turk or Bulgarian, Balkan Moslem or Balkan Christian, and that it is to be found ingrained even in the highest product of Mid-European "kultur" and philosophy. Bulgaria, undoubtedly, had a justifiable grievance, which, added to the bright visions of future greatness (albeit under German auspices) which confederation with the Central European Powers seemed to offer, was much more than enough to bring her into line with those Powers. No other course could possibly have been expected of her. Furthermore, we must remember that the Bulgar is as much Hun as Slav, and that he has a remarkable history behind him. This may require some explanation, for the interest which Russia has shown in the past in the welfare of Bulgaria has been usually accredited to the fact that Bulgaria is essentially Slav, and partakes of the ideals and national aspirations of that great and widely extended race of people. Nearly four hundred years before Christ, under Philip of Macedon, Bulgaria was practically Greek, and it was owing chiefly to her geographical position and the avenues of commerce which that position enabled her to maintain to the north that a way was opened out for the inevitable irruptions of Goths and Huns which have filled up the chequered history of her

early existence. It was by these southern and south-western approaches that the Goths (or Skyths, for the distinction is sometimes rather difficult to determine) were enabled first to challenge, and finally to destroy, the power of Rome when Bulgaria had become a Roman province. Thus early did Bulgaria assert the great importance of her geographical position in deciding the destinies of Europe, for the might of the Roman Empire was practically broken in Bulgaria. Towards the end of the second century of our era "Teutonic" Goths from the Baltic regions came down from the north and displaced what must then have been Slav domination on the borders of the Black Sea. These Goths were thus geographically dovetailed between the Roman Balkan provinces south of the Danube and Slavs and Huns to the north and north-east. It would appear that they became subsequently much amalgamated with the Slavs, who have ever been settled agriculturists, tillers of the soil, and who, after the almost invariable natural process under similar conditions, gradually assimilated the nomadic invaders. Meanwhile (about A.D. 200) they crossed the Danube, devastated the Roman provinces of Moesia and Thrace, and took Philippopolis. Later they defeated the Emperor Decius in the region of the Danube delta, and firmly established themselves in the Balkans as colonists. The seat of the Roman Empire was removed from Rome to Constantinople in order the more readily to meet these Gothic irruptions. For a time the danger was averted by the defeat of the Goths at Nish by Claudius (A.D. 269), and the Romans withdrew to

the reconquered province of Moesia in Eastern Serbia and Western Bulgaria. For a century there was peace, and then once again war broke out and Bulgaria was restored as a Roman province. It was then that the Huns appeared on the scene from the north-east and drove the Goths across the Danube into Bulgaria again, but a reinforcement of Goths from the north enabled them to turn the tide of victory in their favour ; Valens was defeated at Adrianople, and the power of Rome was shattered, whilst the Goths re-occupied Bulgaria. In the fourth and fifth centuries A.D. Huns swarmed into Bulgaria, whilst the Slavs, who had been more or less in occupation since the beginning of the third century, increased in numbers and formed colonies. Finally, in the seventh century the Bulgars from the Volga regions reached the Danube. Crossing Russia, they took possession of all North-East Bulgaria between the Danube and the Black Sea. These Bulgars were originally a Hunnish tribe, possibly akin to the Turk, but they adopted the Slav language and many Slav customs. The Slavs had already imposed their language on the mixed peoples of Bulgaria, although it was the Bulgars who gave their name to the heterogeneous population. Thus again did the gentle agricultural Slav practically assimilate the fierce nomad invaders. This is a characteristic of Slav nationality which it is well to bear in mind.

It took two centuries to amalgamate the Bulgars and the Slavs, the distinction between the two peoples being maintained in their national customs and methods. The Bulgars, like all the Asiatic nomads,

fought on horseback, the Slavs on foot. The Bulgars had several wives; the Slavs contented themselves with one; and whilst the Bulgars were meat-eaters, the Slavs were vegetarians. In process of time the Bulgars became a very powerful people and found themselves strong enough to resist the dictates of Constantinople. They defeated the Emperor Justinian II., who was but a feeble representative of the ancient Roman emperors, and forced him into exile. There is a picturesque story of his return at the invitation of the Bulgarian prince, who was ready to forgive and forget past animosities on condition that the Emperor gave him his daughter in marriage and much gold. The truce did not last long, however, and in another campaign Justinian was again defeated, and we actually hear of the Bulgarian "Kaisar" Tervel attempting to place another emperor over the Byzantines. Thus did Bulgarian influence reach even to the Bosphorus. Early in the ninth century Bulgaria again entered the lists with the Byzantine Empire and defeated Constantine V., and carried war to the gates of Constantinople, where human sacrifices were offered up before the walls for the success of the siege. The Bulgarian chief, the redoubtable Krum, washed his feet in the waters of the Bosphorus and sprinkled his people with the holy water. He was bought off by a yearly tribute which included a fixed number of maidens. It was toward the end of the ninth century that Bulgaria adopted the Christian faith. The wars between Bulgaria and the Greek emperors had the effect of introducing Christian slaves, and

even priests, into that country, and it was thus that the first seeds of Christianity were sown. King Boris I. finally adopted the creed of the Greek Church in preference to that of Rome just about one thousand years ago. Some pretty incidents which lighten the prose of history occurred about this period in connection with Christian missionary efforts. Boris is said to have been converted by his sister who had been carried captive by the Greeks and learnt their creed whilst in captivity. Boris retired to a monastery, and was succeeded by his second son, Simeon, under whom Bulgaria experienced her golden age. He soon found a pretext for a campaign against the Greeks, and it is then that we first hear of the Magyars in Europe. The Greeks called in the Magyars (who were not very remote neighbours of the Bulgarians in the Russian steppes) to their aid, and these fierce allies were for a time successful; but Simeon, by the crude device of falling rapidly and unexpectedly upon their encampment and making a clean sweep of their wives and families whilst the warriors were busy elsewhere, compelled them to retire into Hungary, where we still find them as a compact nationality. Simeon was the first king to call himself Czar—a title which he received from Rome. Under the Czar Simeon Bulgaria extended from the Black Sea to the Adriatic. Albania was mostly Bulgarian. All Serbia, including Nish and Belgrade, belonged to him. His power was felt across the Danube, and it is probable that parts of Rumania and Transylvania were added at one time to the Bulgarian Empire. Bulgaria was, under

Simeon, the dominant state of the Balkan Peninsula. There was, in fact, little room for any other state. Bulgaria will never again be the Bulgaria of the first three decades of the tenth century, but Bulgaria has not forgotten her former greatness, and her aspirations are based on historic record. After Simeon's death the Greeks made another bid for the recovery of their former domination, and they called the Russian Slav to their assistance to oppose the Bulgarian Slav. The wonderful success of the Russians, however, frightened their Greek allies, who turned round and joined the Bulgars against them—quite a characteristic example of Greek political morality. In the year A.D. 1015 Bulgaria was once again subdued by Basil II., called the Bulgar slayer. He defeated the hitherto victorious Czar Samuel on the banks of the Heliada near Thermopylæ and drove him into refuge on his rocky island home on Lake Prespá. Then did the fortunes of Bulgaria decline. Greek influence prevailed everywhere, and it was not till late in the twelfth century that Bulgaria again rose to the front rank amongst Balkan States under the guidance and government of two remarkable men, John and Peter Asen of the Imperial House of Sisman. They re-established the ancient kingdom and made Tirnova the capital of a second Bulgarian Empire. John Asen fell by the hand of an assassin, but his name is still honoured in Bulgaria, and the memory of his race is preserved. His mild brother Peter was soon dispossessed and was supplanted by another and fiercer brother Kalojan, who detested the Greeks, married a wife from the

savage Kumani people, and made himself such a terror to the Greeks by his repeated victories and ferocious character that they restored all the country taken by them from the first Empire. Thus the borders of Bulgaria were enlarged from the Black Sea to the Struma and Vardar. Kalojan styled himself "Emperor of the Bulgarians and the Wallachs," the Wallachs being a very important though scattered race of people who retained their nationality and traced descent from Roman colonists. It seems probable that they finally developed into the modern Rumanian. In the early thirteenth century the glories of Bulgaria were revived under the rule of John Asen II., who is described as the pleasantest figure of all the Bulgarian czars. A contemporary wrote of him that he neither drew "his sword against his own countrymen nor disgraced himself by the murder of Greeks, so not only Bulgarians but Greeks and other nations loved him." His Empire stretched from the Black Sea to the Ægean and Adriatic.

With the death of John Asen II. the glory of the second Bulgarian Empire was on the wane; and this is the moral drawn from this recurrent phase in Bulgarian history, many years ago, by the able writer of the *History of Bulgaria* in the "Stories of the Nations Series": "The history of the Balkan Peninsula proves that the welfare of a Slav nation is almost invariably bound up with *one man* and when he falls the nation falls with him." We might ask, "Who is to be the man for Russia now?" There followed a time of chequered history for Bulgaria. Diminished rapidly to half her size, she

became the prey of domestic usurpers, of Tartar hordes, and of Greek intrigues. The Serbians first rise to significance and defeat the Bulgarians near Kostendel in 1330, and it is about the middle of this century that we first hear of the Turks who began to harry Bulgaria south of the Balkans. The Greek Emperor implored the Bulgarians and Serbians to assist him against this new and most powerful foe. But Balkan rivalries and jealousies stood in the way, as they have stood ever since, and the Turk has been able to take advantage of them, first to conquer and subsequently to hold the best of the Balkan Peninsula for five centuries. The Bulgarian czar became the vassal of the Turk in 1366 and pledged himself to aid them. His sister was given to the great Sultan Murad as a hostage for the good faith of Bulgaria, and we read how this great lady, although she became the wife of a Turk, kept her Christian faith and saved her country. When Sofia was captured and the Serbs were defeated on the plain of Kossovo Bulgaria was doomed. The last of the czars, Sisman, is said to have died in battle. According to the popular legend, he was wounded seven times, and seven springs of water are still to be seen near the sources of the Marica which represent the ebbing of his life's blood. Thus fell after two centuries the second Bulgarian Empire, and the whole land owned the supremacy of the Turk. We hardly need follow the chequered story of Bulgaria under the Turk. What I designed to show by this brief sketch is, firstly, the historic basis of Bulgarian ideals and aspirations, and next the extraordinary admixture

of nationalities which have been amalgamated in the production of the modern Bulgar. He is, as already explained, not nearly so much Slav as is the Serbian, and there are to be found in him the characteristics of most of the races he combines. Bulgaria is still a sort of scrap-heap of the nations wherein at least six separate nationalities are easily to be distinguished side by side without any real assimilation between them. Remnants of the Turks are widespread, more especially in the eastern provinces ; Greeks still retain colonies and territory on the Black Sea coast ; Rumanian descendants of the old Roman colonies in Dacia ; Serbs and Montenegrins of more or less pure Slav origin ; Albanians and Macedonians are all to be found in this scrap-heap which has accumulated during past ages in a geographical cul-de-sac. And there is the Bulgar himself, Hun by extraction and Slav by adoption, but who possesses characteristics and idiosyncrasies which entitle him to represent a powerful national entity. It is difficult to co-ordinate the various opinions which have been so freely expressed as to the character of the Bulgar. He is the amiable and good-hearted peasant of a delightful and picturesque agricultural field to the casual traveller, or he is the savage and blood-thirsty perpetrator of the most horrible atrocities, according to the point of view from which the observer may happen to see him. Exactly the same may be said of all the peoples of Asiatic origin who have drifted into Europe within historic days, and over whose heads the centuries have not rolled long enough for the evolution of the free institutions of the West ;

who have never been educated by a free press, or loosened the bonds of the heavy-handed domination of a military autocracy or a priestly hierarchy. The primeval savagery of man has survived longer in the East than in the West ; and those peoples who can trace their origin to the East, descendants of Goths and Huns, Turks, Tartars, or Mongols, whether they be Slavs or Goth-begotten Teutons, and who have never yet evolved for themselves a free and influential public opinion—an educated opinion that can serve as a national schoolmaster to control their emotions and criticize their ideals—still retain the primeval mark of the beast which inevitably betrays them when under the influence of passion. The veneer of civilization and the natural tendency of man towards brotherly kindness and sympathy when his feelings are not too deeply aroused is to be found everywhere in the Balkans (as in the rest of the world), and then we hear much of the admirable hospitality and dignity of the picturesque Albanian and Montenegrin, of the friendly disposition of Greek, Serbian, Bulgarian, and Turk ; we even hear of their culture, and loving-kindness to women, children and animals, and we learn to like these people, just as we like the Afghan chief or the Beluch warrior of the Indian frontier for all that is good and charming about his personality. But, in matters of treachery and savage destructiveness, the Teuton or the Turk of the present is not so very far removed from the Goth or the Hun or the Mongol of ancient and mediæval history, and, in some respects, his distant Asiatic cousin of the Indian frontier hills

is a gentleman by comparison. On the Russian Slav, indeed, the light of a new dawn may be breaking—a dawn of political freedom where men can say what they think, and where the tendency of such thoughts will most surely make for the same ideals of chivalry, courtesy, justice, and humanity which we hope and believe are the animating principles of the Anglo-Saxon and Latin races. The Bulgar is neither better nor worse than his neighbours, and Bulgaria is bound from her geographical position to be powerful in any Balkan coalition. Therefore it seems better in our own interests that Bulgaria should be strong and friendly. If her Germanic support crumbles away from her it may well happen that no political difficulties will stand in the way of the friendliness—although her antagonism during the War may bar the way to the fulfilment of her aspirations.

CHAPTER VI

RUMANIA

AMONGST Balkan States Rumania can lay claim to a certain priority of interest not only from the extent of her territories, which exceed those of any other Balkan State, and the development of her commerce, which, before the War, equalled that of Serbia, Bulgaria, Montenegro, and Greece put together, but also from the traditions which surround the realization of her nationality in regions once sacred to an early phase of European civilization. It is from colonial citizens of the Roman Empire, when Rome was yet mistress of the civilized world, that the Rumanians claim descent and the rights of heritage. About three and a half centuries B.C. barbarian tribes from the Black Sea regions swarmed up the Danube and occupied the territories on the left bank known to the Romans as Dacia. It seems possible that the Dacians were the same people under a Latin designation who are called Geta by the Greeks. After effecting their freedom from Macedonian rule by the defeat of Lysimachus, the Macedonian ruler of Thrace, *the Dacians increased largely in numbers and strength

until they came into collision with the Roman legions about two centuries later, when they practically held their own. They remained a formidable menace to Rome, compelling the Emperor Domitian to make an ignominious treaty of peace with them, and it was not until Trajan arose in the year A.D. 98, and at once made preparations (by the construction of roads and improvement of communications) to settle matters with this warlike people once for all, that they were subdued. It cost the Romans, under Trajan, two expeditions and much severe fighting to defeat Decebalus, the Dacian king, and to annex the province to Rome. It was in the interests of the second expedition that the magnificent stone bridge (or bridges, for there appears to have been two) was built opposite Turnu Severin by the engineer Apollodorus of Damascus. In A.D. 106 Dacia became a Roman province. Trajan's column in Rome is the proud memorial of these two hard-fought campaigns. The mausoleum which covers the Dacian king, Decebalus, is still to be traced amidst the ruins at Varhely, the ancient Dacian capital.

After the evacuation of the province of Dacia in the year A.D. 270 by Rome there is nothing of trustworthy historical record about Rumania for about a thousand years. The Balkan regions throughout were subject to a constant condition of flux and flow amidst political confusions in which no single state stands out in prominent record; no gathering together of the remnants of Roman colonial possessions was ever effected by any successor to the Imperial power of Rome after Rome had regained her ascend-

ancy for a short period about A.D. 330 : and when sound history recommences it succeeds but a patch-work of tradition. Goths first appeared about A.D. 247, and thereafter Goth and Hun irruptions in periodic sequence were chiefly responsible for the disastrous confusion which dominated the Balkans for ten centuries after the disappearance of the Romans.

The province of Dacia was not geographically conterminous with the Rumania of to-day, for it included broad tracts in Hungary to the east of the Theiss River ; Transylvania, Maramaresch, Cristana, and the Banat of Tamesvar between the Theiss and the Carpathians were all part of the Dacian kingdom. It appears to have been the first fierce irruptions of the Huns which drove the Roman colonists into the upland valleys of Transylvania and the western foot-hills of the Carpathians, where they succeeded in retaining a strong national entity, faithfully preserving their ancient character and ideals. In the course of centuries they seem to have forgotten their traditional connection with Rome, whilst they nevertheless preserved the Latin tongue, their language being fundamentally Latin still, with an admixture of Slav. Transylvania is naturally claimed as the original home of the Rumanian race, and the Rumanians proudly boast that it is from ancestors bred in a Carpathian atmosphere that they derive their national stability and great traditions. The Huns disappeared with Attila in A.D. 453, and the Hungarians appear on the scene in 839. The gradual and progressive encroachment of Magyars in later times, after they were driven westward by Simeon

of Bulgaria, resulted at first in a process of assimilation which might have ended in the social fusion of the races. The Magyars adopted the Latin tongue and copied Daco-Roman institutions. But the bitter struggle based on religious differences which seems to have culminated in the sixteenth century throughout Europe resulted in the emigration of many Rumanian nobles from Transylvania across the Carpathians into Wallachia. The Wallachs take the historical stage early in the Middle Ages. They have been generally assumed to be Daco-Romans, who gradually occupied the southern province of Rumania to which they gave the name Wallachia, but their origin is not very clear. The modern Vlachs of the Pindus range in Greece are survivors of a mediæval state, Vlachia, which once comprised most of Thessaly; and there was also a Bulgaro-Roman state formerly governed by a Vlach (John Asen) in the regions of the ancient Roman province Mœsia (Bulgaria). The Vlach people of the Pindus mountains are still regarded by Albanians as descendants of Roman colonists, and they intermarry with them, so that the Vlach element in the Balkan population is widespread, and it is everywhere held to be representative of ancient Roman occupation. It is probable, then, that the Wallachs were cognate with the Vlachs, and that the Rumanian nobles who crossed the Carpathians in the sixteenth century found a district in Wallachia peopled more or less by a cognate nationality. For a short period towards the end of the fifteenth century the western regions of the old Dacian province beyond the Carpathians were united

to the eastern, but thereafter Rumania has been divided. The solid wall of the Carpathians has stood between Transylvania and the newer provinces which had achieved independence, Wallachia in 1290 and Moldavia in 1350. The presence of constant aggression on the river-bounded territories of these provinces by Turk, Tartar, Pole, and Magyar effectually prevented reunion, and thus the Rumanians of Transylvania finally became the Serfs of Hungary. The coming of the Turk rendered national progress impossible, and it was not till the beginning of the last century that any real form of national revival commenced to spread ; the first national school being founded in Bucharest in 1817. The history of Wallachia and Moldavia from the early days of their independence until the strike for nationality is stirring and picturesque enough to deserve much more than the mere passing record which is all we can give it here. Towards the end of the thirteenth century we hear of the Turks indistinctly. They appear and disappear again and leave no permanent impression in Rumania, and that country shakes off the shackles of barbarism and assumes a national existence. Then does the old Latin stock spread through the plains whilst emigrants from Transylvania pass into Moldavia. A century of struggle against the Hungarians followed, till, at the close of the fourteenth century, we find the Rumanians in alliance with the Serbs (then a powerful nation) fighting the Turks unsuccessfully on the plain of Kossovo. It was there that the Turk first established his sovereignty over both Serbia and Rumania, but a Rumanian chief, Mirtschia,

was elected to govern Rumania. He renewed the fight with Turkey, and, in alliance with their old enemies the Hungarians, was badly beaten by the Turks on the field of Nicopolis. Timur the Tartar, in his devastating career, scattered the Turks for a while, but they were reunited under Mohamed I. and Turkish rule over Rumania was resumed. After that Rumania was never really independent. In 1456 Vlad "the Impaler" was on the throne of Wallachia and Stephen the Great ruled Moldavia. The blood-thirsty Vlad was assassinated, but not before he had beaten the Turks. Stephen reigned fifty years. He defeated the Turks in 1475 by employing a military ruse which did credit to his ingenuity. He hid a band of trumpeters in a wood and pretended that he had a second army in reserve. But the Turks revenged themselves subsequently in the White Valley (so called from the number of bones left to bleach there), assumed a protectorate over Wallachia, and exacted tribute from the people. At this time the separation of the people into the castes of Boyard, or landowner, and Serf remained the feudal system of the Balkan States generally. There was no law or justice for the Serf, who was simply the slave of the Boyard. In 1593 there appears the great hero of Rumania, Michael "the Brave," who completely scattered the Turks, disposed by drastic measures of all Turkish creditors, and entered Transylvania in great pomp after defeating its Cardinal Prince. It was under Michael that, for a short time, Transylvania and Wallachia were united into one kingdom. When he perished at the hands of an assassin, the romantic

age of Rumania perished with him. His great fault appears to have been that he never succeeded in gaining the hearts of either the people or the Boyards : he sat on the fence and made enemies of both. But his personal chivalry and bravery have earned for him the highest place in the roll of famous Rumanian leaders, in spite of a lamentable want of diplomacy in his dealings with his supporters. A new age then dawned for Rumania under a succession of venal Greek rulers—an age of extortion, corruption, bribery, and frightful extravagance. The crowns of Wallachia and Moldavia were put up to auction and bought by the highest bidder ; the grossest intrigues were set on foot to secure the possession of any shady office where the necks of the wretched people could be wrung in the interests of contributions to the pockets of Greek adventurers. There was no national sentiment during this period, and patriotism was dead. In the middle of this age of decadence, however, we find two princes, Basil "the Wolf" and Bassarab, governing the provinces in the interests of the Rumanians. They effected useful reforms, and under them there was certain promise of national culture. But they were not strong enough to resist Greek influence. After them anarchy set in again. Out of the chaos only one ruler, Scherman, emerged with any sort of credit.

Russia began to take a sinister interest in Rumanian affairs in 1674, and forty years later there is recorded the first of those Russo-Rumanian alliances which have so greatly affected the destinies of the country. Peter the Great's first efforts against the

Turks with the assistance of Wallachia and Moldavia, carried out under the banner of Christianity and claiming the religious character of a crusade, were unsuccessful, and Peter himself narrowly escaped capture. The Sultan thenceforward determined to govern these Danubian provinces by Greek administration, and the government of a succession of Greek rulers called Phanariots lasted from 1716 to 1822. But the Ottoman Empire was then on its decline, and the Greek substitute for direct Turkish administration was as corrupt and ineffective as the degraded rule of the Porte. Rumanian government became a matter of commercial traffic ; the crowns of the two principalities changed hands so often that within little more than a century there were no less than thirty-three governors of Moldavia and thirty-five of Wallachia. The average of three years was hardly enough to compensate the governor for the capital expense of his crown and to fill the pockets of his swarm of needy Greek retainers. The country was literally "sweated" to make the government pay. Amusing tales are told about the oriental luxury of these Turko-Greek hospodars — or governors — in residence at their capitals, Bucharest and Jassy. The hospodar was incapable of exertion. His bread was cut in small pieces so that he need not exert himself to break it, his cupbearer raised the goblet to his lips ; his siesta after meals was the signal for the cessation of all business in the city lest he should be disturbed ; he was lifted into bed by his footmen. His amiable wives were fond of him. One princess spent £2500 over a moderate wardrobe, and it is on

record that spiteful jealousies kept the Court in a state of simmering intrigue. The Rumanian nobles imitated them as far as they could. Bad as the Phanariots were, there was every now and then a useful reformer to be found amongst them. In 1736 a Russo-Turkish war, nominally in the interests of the two principalities, effected little or nothing, but in 1768 Russia gained a substantial victory over the Turks on the Dniester, and placed them both in Russian occupation. Austria, however, intervened, and the provinces (which were never annexed to Russia) were restored to the Sultan by the Treaty of Kamardji, which was on the whole favourable to the people. Austria made use of her opportunities to annex Bukovina, the most fertile province of Moldavia. Russian intrigues and further wars only ended in leaving matters as they were under the Kamardji Treaty till Russia, relieved from the dread of Buonaparte, could again turn her attention to Turkey, and succeeded in 1812 in annexing the delta of the Danube and Bessarabia. Then did the Pruth, which now forms Rumania's eastern boundary, become to the Rumanian "the accursed river." Phanriot rule came to an end through the dissensions consequent on the Greek War of Independence. The Sultan at last perceived that it was to his interest to concede Home Rule to Rumania, and in 1822 two native Boyards were nominated chiefs of the two principalities. The condition of Rumania was then deplorable from long-continued war and misgovernment. This was Russia's opportunity, and she diplomatically manœuvred herself into the position of protector,

and increased her influence until the Russian Minister could declare that military conquest would be quite superfluous. Practical improvements and reforms followed, and the spirit of nationality began to revive. Contact with France led to increased culture until the Czar thought it was going too far. In 1848 the European epidemic of revolution spread to Hungary and Rumania and ended by a Russian occupation of Moldavia. But the doctrine of nationalities had taken root, and the Western Powers were aroused to an interest in the fate of the Danubian provinces. It was the Crimean War which finally led to the liberation of both principalities and to their union under one sovereign. Part of the Dobrudja was restored to Turkey and part of Bessarabia to Moldavia. The first election of a Boyard native ruler was not a success, and in 1866 he was forced to abdicate. The choice by election of Prince Carlos, a Hchenzollern prince, followed, and after 500 years of misgovernment under the Turk, Rumania at last had rest. Prince Carlos was only twenty-seven years old when he came to the uneasy throne of Rumania, and he was faced with most unusual difficulties in establishing order amongst the turbulent nobility and in promoting prosperity amongst the people. His rule was the making of Rumania. That, as a Hohenzollern, he was strongly pro-German in his sentiments is no matter of surprise ; the surprise is rather that his son, Ferdinand, the present King, is not so likewise. It is not too much to say that King Carlos secured the independence of Rumania in 1877 by his diplomatic ability, and the regeneration of that land

of promise by his energy and personal interest in its welfare. He married the Princess Elizabeth of Wied, better known as Carmen Sylva, a lady who would anywhere be distinguished for her great literary ability. Let us recognize in King Carlos those qualities of kingly power which when rightly directed have ever been the greatest factor in the making of a kingdom. When the last great struggle between Russia and Turkey took place, a struggle which is modern history, Rumania cast in her lot with Russia, and was mainly instrumental through the valour and tenacity of her troops in deciding the issue against Turkey on the historic field of Plevna. But she gained little by her chivalrous assistance. At the close of the war Russia reclaimed the whole of Bessarabia and restored to Rumania the Dobrudja as a very doubtful exchange.

What we learn from this sketch of Rumanian history is that no Rumanian nationality, including Rumanians of Transylvania, Wallachia, and Moldavia, has really achieved an independent existence. Evidence that Rumanians of all three provinces were derived from the same original Draco-Rumanian stock seems to be conclusive, but that the original Transylvanian-Rumanian crossed the Carpathians and peopled the districts east of those mountains does not seem to be quite clear. Rumanian claim to Transylvania is based on this early connection and not on any recent national existence, which included Transylvania with Wallachia and Moldavia. For five centuries Rumania shared the fate of other Balkan States and was obliterated by Turkey, and it is only

within the last half-century or so that she can point to an independent national existence, free from the constantly recurrent military occupations resulting from the perpetual rivalry between Austria and Russia. Now, however, Rumania takes her place as the foremost of the Balkan States, and with a strong claim based on recent history to both Bessarabia and Bukovina she supports a weaker one to Transylvania, founded on very ancient racial affinities.

The Rumanian nationality, if we include Transylvania, numbers about twelve and a half millions of people in a fairly compact geographical group. Seven and a half millions are in Rumania, about three millions in Hungary, one million in Bessarabia, and perhaps half a million in Bukovina. The restoration of the "Rumania irredenta" of Hungary would, therefore, add sufficient to Rumanian man-power to render her the strongest of the Balkan States. Even with the addition of the Rumanians of Bessarabia and Bukovina, without Transylvania, Rumania would still be able to hold her own against a federation of the Southern Slav states, or against either Bulgaria or Greece, which countries can only muster about six millions of people each.

Geographically situated between Austria and Russia, Rumanian history, as we see, is one long record of a struggle against occupation by one or other of these Powers, and she probably owes her present existence as a nationality to the mantle of protection thrown over her by Turkey for the five centuries during which she languished under Moslem misrule. It is true that she has lost Bessarabia to

Russia and Bukovina to Austria within the period embraced by modern history, but her political junction with Transylvania dates from no period more recent than the close of the fifteenth century. Rumania shares with Poland the unenviable distinction of being a geographical buffer-land, or breakwater, between two powerful nations, but, unlike Poland, she has a fairly strong natural frontier on the sides most exposed to attack. Nevertheless, it was on the western frontier, where the mountains face northward to Transylvania, that the gates were forced by Austro-German legions when Rumania lost the province of Wallachia. This boundary of the west, resting on the watershed of the Transylvanian Alps and of the Carpathians, and extending to within 100 miles of Czernovitz in Bukovina, continues to follow a system of mountain divides until it turns the head affluents of the river Sereth and reaches an affluent of the Pruth a little to the south-west of Czernovitz. So far it is an almost unbroken mountain boundary, and it furnished Rumania with a defensive line which enabled her greatly to retard the Austro-German advance. That earlier sweep across the mountains into Hungary undertaken by Rumania as an effective demonstration of her objective in joining the War was little less than disastrous; and it revealed no promise of the discovery of a natural frontier between the mountains and the Theiss River which would be a sound exchange for that which already existed in the mountain ranges of the Transylvanian Alps and Carpathians. The Rumanian advance, undertaken with such high resolve and

supported by the strongest national sentiment, was swept back again with no great difficulty, and the gallant resistance which was subsequently made against overwhelming forces was due to strong positions which were the gift of the mountains.

It was all that the Germans could do with the aid of a most powerful artillery to force their way into the Wallachian plains. Their advance, however, revealed the weak links in the mountain chain of defence, not only in the shape of ordinary passes, but in the transverse passage of considerable rivers, which open out a broad highway right through the mountain system. Thus the Danube breaks through at the Iron Gates, making passage for a road and a railway connecting Orsova with Craiova. It is true that this narrow passage of sixty miles or so, within which lies the town of Turnu Severin, flanked on the right by the rushing stream of the Yellow (not Blue) Danube, 500 yards wide, and on the left by dominating hills, is itself a formidable feature, which should offer successive opportunities for defence, with the chance of overwhelming any force as it cleared the passage and entered into the plains on a narrow front; but it does not, unfortunately, stand alone. Barely sixty miles from the Iron Gates is another comparatively open way, provided by the passing through the mountains of the Shil River, which rises in the hills beyond the watershed at the base of the Parinzu Peaks, and this again is separated by hardly fifty miles of distance from the historical Rotan Thurm, where the Alt (Olt), a river which has gathered strength from 150 miles of mountain torrent generated

amidst the wild forest-clad hills of Transylvania, cuts its way through the Alpine backbone and opens out an easy way into the Wallachian plains. Farther east again Kronstadt is connected with Bucharest by a well-known and much-traversed pass.

From the point where the Transylvanian Alps join with the Carpathians and the latter change direction to the north, enclosing between them the great elbow marked by the position of Kronstadt, where the Carpathian system divides the province of Moldavia from Hungary, passes are less frequent and the capacity of the mountains for defence becomes proportionally greater.

A remarkable feature about Rumanian geography is the regularity of its hydrographic system. Between the Iron Gates on the west and the Pruth on the east rivers run systematically from north to south with an occasional easterly trend. No less than eight large rivers, including the Buzco, which joins the Danube near Galatz, traverse the plains of Wallachia from the northern mountains to the Danube, producing a series of wide valleys, wherein lies a magnificent prospect of agricultural development. Beyond the Danube again, where that river takes its northerly bend ere it meets the Pruth to effect a right-angled turn eastwards and vanish by many channels into the Black Sea, there is the low-lying (but not flat) expanse of wheat-producing country known as the Dobrudja. The swamps and marshes which fringe the course of the great river through the Dobrudja on its left bank extend so far from the river that the Cernavoda bridge, which crosses here, is, with its

approaches, twelve and a half miles in length. This great bridge was designed to link Bucharest with Constantza locally, and Berlin with the Black Sea more remotely. The Dobrudja railway appears to follow rather closely the lines of the ancient Roman wall which is said to have been built by Trajan for the defence of the province of Moesia against the irruptions of barbarians from the north. The weakness of this frontier was thus early recognized.

Moldavia, the northern province of Rumania, includes the basin of one great river, the Sereth, with the western half of that of the Pruth. It is an unusual hydrographical feature that the course of these two great rivers from north to south, with a slight easterly trend, follows the strike of the Carpathian divide, amongst which so many of the affluents of the Sereth take their rise. One or two of these affluents rise beyond the western boundary of Moldavia, which does not strictly follow the line of main divide. The Bekas Pass and the Gyimes Pass are thus formed, but the sources of the streams which mark them are not far to the west, and there is no royal road through the Carpathians such as is afforded by the Rotan Thurm in the Transylvanian Alps.

The salient feature of Rumanian geography is that of a vast sloping glacis, extending from the base of the Carpathian and Transylvanian mountains to the Danube. The height of Galatz, near the mouth of the river, is not more than 50 feet above sea-level. At the capital, Bucharest, some forty miles from the Danube, it has risen to 250 feet. At Jassy, the old

capital of Moldavia, in the north, it is about 1000 feet. At Sanaia, the summer capital of Rumania, we are reminded of one of the hill-stations of India, for it lies at the foot of mountains which rise above it to the height of 8000 to 9000 feet, with forest-clad slopes and all the landscape beauty of a sub-Himalayan region, but without the crowning grandeur of Himalayan snow-clad peaks. Nevertheless, the summits of the Carpathians are described as being often wild and broken, sometimes even savage, in character, and more akin to the Dolomite regions of the Alps than to the softer lines of Pyrenean mountain folds. The most attractive part of Rumania is to be found in the lower valleys winding amidst the spurs of the foothills which spread downwards to the plains. Not only is there a greater wealth of cultivation amongst these lower hills and a profusion of flowers and fruit unknown elsewhere, but the people are said to be attractive in appearance and manners, with a picturesqueness of costume and a gentle courtesy of demeanour such as is usually to be found in Switzerland. These villages, too, are better built, and there is a general air of prosperity and content. Opinions differ as to the idiosyncrasies of the higher social classes in Rumania. We hear Bucharest spoken of sometimes as the most dissipated city in Europe, but it does not really seem to differ largely in its social aspects from other great centres of a cosmopolitan society, nor can we expect that the summer capital of Sanaia should be more strict and decorous than other summer capitals that we know of elsewhere. Alongside the monastery at Sanaia there is said to

be a beautiful spread of grass plateau land, whereon the rank and fashion of Rumanian society equally with the peasant classes are wont to disport themselves on Sunday. There they meet to dance their national dances, and, if one realizes the passion for dancing which distinguishes Hungarians and Rumanians alike, there is nothing to excite surprise and probably nothing seriously to jeopardize the sacred atmosphere of the adjacent monastery. Descending from the hill regions into the flat plains of the Danube the scenery rapidly changes. The charm and variety of the landscape gives place to a more sombre outlook over vast flats, maintaining a coarse grass and a scattered, but stunted, growth of bush. Here and there are patches of maize or of gourds, but there is no great extent of wheat or of other cereal cultivation, and the land slips down to the Danube in uninteresting grades. The sluggish stream of the great river has low and indifferent banks on the Rumanian side, where extensive marshes and some lake country border it, the right bank being higher and commanding that of Rumania. The Danube has been internationalized for purposes of navigation ever since the close of the Crimean War. The bulk of the trade with Rumania is in British hands, British commercial interests on the Danube being greater than those of all other countries together. There is a curious survival of the bad old times of constant raids and aggressions to be seen in the form of the dwelling-places in the Danube districts near the river, which applies not only to the peasantry, but to some even of the wealthier classes

who adhere to conservative principles in their mode of life. These dwellings differ from the huts and hovels which are usually the habitations of the poorer classes elsewhere in the fact that they are sunk into the ground. A circular pit is dug and lined with clay. A roof of brushwood is added, with a hole in the middle to let out the smoke. Steps lead down to the entrance, opposite to which is a roof window, so that the whole forms a fairly well-concealed dug-out, which is undoubtedly damp, but is said to be not quite so disagreeable as might well be expected. Occasionally it is protected from inundation due to the natural surface drainage by a cutting or ditch round it, but this does not appear always to be the case.

Bucharest, the capital, a city of cupolas and spires, is in the lowlands, separated from the better and brighter land of the hills by a considerable space of more or less unproductive country. Jassy, the old capital of Moldavia, has much finer surroundings.

In contrast to the flat monotony and uninteresting features of the lower Danube scenery is the passage of the river through the Iron Gates, where, for some sixty or seventy miles of its course, it traverses Carpathian hills, sometimes widening out into a stream a mile or two in width, sometimes contracted to about 120 yards within cliff-bound gorges. The fall of the river through the Gates is not great, but great enough to produce rapids which are difficult for navigation in low-water periods. Passengers and cargoes have to be shifted into smaller boats when this occurs, a process which must greatly interfere with the success-

ful business of navigation. Along the southern bank runs the old Roman road, known as Trajan's, and the last remnants of the bridges built by Apollodorus are still to be recognized, exhibiting all the speciality of Roman structure in their hard rubble and concrete foundations. In this land of great rivers there are hardly any lakes, but such is the variety of the land, divided as it is between mountains, uplands, and plains, that it might be made productive of almost any form of agriculture. Rumania has all the natural resources which should render the country self-contained. Wheat, oil, and rock-salt are great sources of national wealth. The city of Bucharest thirty-five years ago was a large, irregular, straggling city of some 200,000 inhabitants. It was always a garden-city, there being many beautiful gardens surrounding houses which are built of brick and plastered white. The effect of weather action on this form of outside architectural embellishment used to give the whole city a certain appearance of dilapidation. Much has been added to the existing ancient architectural beauty of the innumerable Byzantine churches since then. New streets have been added, and the embankment of the once insignificant and dirty stream which permeated the city has changed its character.

The climate of Rumania is just as variable as its variable altitudes, but it everywhere suffers from violent extremes of heat and cold. It has been said that "Rumania has no spring." The cutting, easterly blasts which sweep the country from the Russian steppes in winter are balanced by a fiercely hot summer

with little of an intermediate or gradual growth in the thermometer record to indicate the change.

* Rumanian aspirations reach outward to the north, south, east, and west. On the north she still hopes for the restoration of Bukovina, once a part of the Moldavian principality. To the east there is the province of Bessarabia, which is, as it always has been, Rumanian in sentiment and national ideal, where about one million Rumanians still yearn for restoration from Russian thralldom to political freedom with their compatriots. The province of Bessarabia, which covers an area rather more than that of Denmark or Sweden, is described as a country of very varied attraction. Three-fourths of it are as wooded and hilly as the neighbouring district of Moldavia, with which country it is allied by race affinity. In the south it is but an arid and sun-scorched plateau, populated by a medley of various races from contiguous countries, chiefly Germans, Bulgars, and Turks. Bessarabia has declared for independence since the Russian revolution (a claim which is recognized now by the Ukraine), and is governed by a National Moldavian Committee, who content themselves with a rational and moderate programme. No demand has been made for union with Rumania, but there is great possibility that a reconstructed Rumania, with her Transylvanian aspirations satisfied and a revised scheme of agrarian reform fully carried out, will eventually attract Bessarabia into the national fold, at least to the extent of incorporating all the Rumanian-speaking peoples of the northern districts of the province. On the south there is the

Dobrudja, which includes the guardianship of the Danubian outlets to the Black Sea, all-important to the commercial security of Rumania, and only recently wrested from her by the might of Germany and Bulgaria combined. To the west there is the "Rumania irredenta" of the Transylvanian upland country, the original home of the race, where no less than three million Rumanians suffer under Magyar domination. It is impossible not to sympathize with the deep-rooted sentiment which embraces Transylvania—a sentiment which is the very soul of national unity, and it is obvious that the realization of this, together with Rumania's other aspirations, would lead to the formation of a Rumanian kingdom within frontiers that would render that country compact, and that her boundaries would be well enough aligned for merely administrative purposes from a central capital. But Rumania must ever remain geographically balanced between Russia and Austria. The old difficulties and the old dangers of such a position still threaten her security in future. Of all the Balkan States, Rumania would seem to require the best defensive and strongest natural boundaries. Bukovina, to the north, possesses all the advantages of a small mountain wedge, and has already proved most difficult to reduce, a most effective barrier to Russian advance into Galicia during the War. Bessarabia would contribute a powerful addition to Rumanian fighting strength in men, but between her eastern river boundary, the Dniester, and the present eastern boundary of Rumania, the Pruth, there is perhaps not much to

choose as a defensive feature. Both are considerable rivers, but we have lately seen that no river is for long a barrier to determined military advance. Throughout the War the fiercest fighting and most determined opposition has always been centred on mountains, hills, and even on low ridges. On the south the Dobrudja is a weak extension of territory, which adds nothing to the strength of Rumania from the strategic or military point of view. The boundary which here shuts off (or which lately shut off) Bulgaria, between the Danube and the Black Sea, was of no military significance whatever, and both that boundary and the river Danube on which it was based proved to be of little value in Rumania's defensive campaign against the forces under Mackensen. In this case the political advantage of complete control of the exit of the Danube into the Black Sea has to be balanced against the disadvantages of a weak frontier. Still more so, unfortunately, is this the case in the west, where the very soul of Rumania still lingers in the valleys and uplands of Transylvania. From the mountains westward nearly to the Theiss River of Hungary a Rumanian population is scattered in homesteads and farms through the land, whilst their overlords, the Magyars, concentrate in the towns. Transylvania is essentially Rumanian, there being but one district, embraced between the arms of the Transylvanian Alps and the Carpathians, which is essentially Magyar. This is an unfortunate exception to the general rule of Rumanian occupation because of its central geographical position. Wherever the dividing line west of Rumanian Transylvania may be

drawn (and there have been several suggestions) there is no prospect of basing it on strong natural features. It would be a composite boundary dependent on such minor accidents of ground elevation as would carry it from river to river as it crossed all the great streams in succession which drain westwards from the Carpathians into the Theiss or the Danube. It would, in fact, cut off a large slice from the eastern basin of the Theiss, and for the greater part of it would inevitably depend on artificial means for its definition in low-lying lands and flats adjoining these rivers. It would be a boundary open to violation and aggression along its whole length, and the ease with which the Rumanian forces which entered Transylvania were driven back again to the mountains, compared with the magnificent stand which was made by those same armies when the mountains were reached during the late German invasion of Rumania, should be an object-lesson in the importance of adhering to a mountain frontier when faced with the perils of a powerful invasion. This, then, is the great problem for Rumania to solve—whether the gain of three million people and the consequent accession of fighting strength (and it would make of Rumania the most formidable fighting state in the Near East), combined with the economic advantages accruing from so promising a territory as Transylvania, would be balanced by the possession of an indefensible boundary, beyond which there must ever lie in wait a powerful enemy, anxious to retrieve a lost territory and only restrained (or not restrained, as the case may be) by the coercive influence of greater powers. The Transylvanian

Alps and the Carpathians are not as the Italian Alps or the Pyrenees, but they form, nevertheless, a great defensive barrier of inestimable value. Is it wise for a country which, like Poland, lies between the hammer and the anvil to part with such an advantage ? This obviously depends on the nature of the New Russia and the New Hungary after the War.

CHAPTER VII

ALBANIA AND GREECE

romance of Greek history, the beauty of her language, her people, and her country, the miracle of her position as the leader of art and culture at a time when nearly all the rest of the world was a welter of barbarism, have all had a supreme effect on international sentiment in Europe, and on English sentiment in particular. Where Greece has entered into the ring of political discussion, and international relations with her have occupied the minds and hearts of our past administrators, there has always been a certain weakness in the manner and method of dealing with her that has almost amounted to political flirtation. It is just as if her past fascinations had been reckoned a sufficient plea in absolution of present indiscretions. We have not quite got over it yet, although those indiscretions have amounted perilously near to open war between us. Something of the same sentiment extends to Greece's twin sister Albania, and, when stripped of romance, the discussion of hard dry facts relative to their influence on the world's progress due to their geographical position amongst

other Mediterranean states seems almost improper. Such facts are, however, of great importance in the world's economy, and we must take them as we find them. Those mountain formations which we have traced from north to south along the eastern Adriatic line, the Dinaric Alps and their final absorption in the Montenegrin massifs, find a geological continuity in Albania and Epirus; that is to say, that an approximation to the Karst limestone formation is to be found in these regions. Albania and Greece are both mountainous countries with river basins sharply separated by intermediate ridges, the rivers affording but an uncertain indication of the roads and communications. Thus the connection between contiguous valleys is often exceedingly narrow and difficult. The usual result obtains from these geographical separations of communities by physical barriers. In Albania especially there is local independence of sentiment and ideal, and a bar to free interchange of thought and community of political determination which renders that country exceedingly difficult to govern. To many minds Albania appears as a country incapable of effective self-government, and destined, at any rate until the progress of education develops unexpected talent for administration amongst Albanians themselves, to be under the tutelage and protection of a stronger state without necessarily sacrificing the spirit of national independence. The boundaries of Albania are well defined. The eastern boundary separating that country from Serbia would undoubtedly be stronger if it did not follow the northern affluent of the Drin

River, called the White Drin, for some fifteen miles south of its tri-junction with Montenegro—all the more so that a railway is projected along that line from the Kossovo plains in Serbia which may ultimately develop into a line to Skutari and the Adriatic by following the Drin or, possibly, be continued southward by a southern affluent (the Black Drin) to Ochrida. Ochrida is bound hereafter to become significant as a nodal point in international communications. From the point where the boundary leaves the White Drin and takes to the mountains it is strong, following a good watershed till it drops to the gorge (Trebishte) which affords the most probable opportunity for the passage of the railway to Ochrida. It then again diverges as a mountain line until it descends to Lake Ochrida, which it divides laterally, in order to reach the Greek frontier and again pass into the hills. About the Greco-Albanian section there is little to be said. It is, on the whole, a strong natural feature, often the international divide ; but, nevertheless, it cuts off the important head affluents of the Albanian river Voyussa, at Ostanitza. It is undoubtedly an easily defensible boundary as a whole in spite of obvious weakness in the extreme north and at Ochrida. There is no sign of any definite organization for military resistance anywhere. On the whole, then, the eastern boundaries of Albania, as they now stand, are based on strong geographical features, forming a nearly continuous mountain wall of great significance, in which wall most of the rivers of Albania take their rise and flow westward to the Adriatic. Throughout Albania from

north to south there is a fundamental structure of parallel mountain folds forming ridges and ranges, highest on its eastern borders and generally lower as they approach the coast, which is not only the original extension of those Alpine formations which can be traced through the Dinaric Alps of Dalmatia to Montenegro, but is akin to similar formations parallel to coast-lines all the world over. On the Persian frontier and the Indian borderland this principle of parallel ridges is unmistakable. There the rivers gather themselves together from the narrow valleys which lie between the ridges, and then burst through them one by one, almost at right angles to their strike, accepting lateral contributions as they make their way through a succession of gorges to the sea. It is all very plain to the observer because the formations are geologically new. In Albania there is the same fundamental principle of mountain building, but it is not so observable. As in the older Himalayas, the long action of many natural causes of attrition has worn down the fundamental backbone of the system and given larger prominence to the ribs, so that the highest peaks are not found on the central divide, so also in Albania there may be difficulty in reducing the tectonic plan to plain observation. But the result is evidenced by the rivers of Albania, and by none more than the Drin, which receives from north and south the two great affluents called the White Drin and the Black Drin respectively, and then shapes westwards, driving a chequered way through intervening cliff-bound gorges to the sea.

The development of the Drin outlet into a highway for the traffic of the richest part of Serbia to the Atlantic, however difficult and remote, is probably only a matter of time, but it must be admitted that such development would practically enrich Serbia rather than Albania, the latter only reaping the advantage of a through line from the Adriatic which would affect a wide extent of country in the Balkan States and, joining the main line from Belgrade at Nish, immensely shorten the distance from Italy to Constantinople. Far more probable, however, and internationally equally important, would be the completion of the projected line from Durazzo to Ochrida, Monastir, and the east, by taking advantage of the geographical opportunity afforded by the Skumbe River. In spite of the crossing of the Yablanitza Dagh at the head of the Skumbe, there is undoubtedly far less of natural obstruction to the construction of this line than is afforded by the Drin. According to some authorities the route would more or less follow that of the old Via Egnatia of the Romans. There is, however, some doubt whether the road called the Via Egnatia did not start from a point on the coast a little north of Avlona—called Apollonia. It is not a matter of great consequence in view of future developments. The coast of Albania and the bearing of its ports and harbours on the question of the Adriatic command, no less than on the matter of internal trade communications, profoundly affects the future of the country. It follows from what I have said as to the general character of the mountain conformations of Albania that com-

munications from north to south are almost non-existent, whilst those from east to west are exceedingly difficult. West of the lateral line afforded by the White and the Black Drins there is, apparently, no road of any significance running from the Montenegrin boundary to the southern extremity of Albania. Consequently sea communication along the coast becomes of increased importance, and is as essential to the economic development of Albania as a central trunk line is to most countries. Yet there are only two ports of any significance—Durazzo and Valona. Durazzo was lately the seat of the ephemeral government which has joined the limbo of all experimental failures. Valona is occupied by Italy in the interests of the Adriatic sea-command, and Italy has thrown the mantle of a protectorate over the whole country. Albania will, it may well be hoped, now find some refuge from her terrible trials of the last five or six years, during which time she has been worried by all the Balkan States in turn. These people, the Albanians, at least appeal to us for a sympathetic interest, for they have preserved their race, customs, and ideals with most remarkable tenacity, and there is still to be found amongst them signs and tokens of their descent from those ancient Illyrians who ruled over the coast territories of the Adriatic in Roman times, and included Bosnia and Dalmatia under their sway. They have resisted the assimilative power of the Slav communities as no other Balkan people have done, as they resisted the power of Rome herself for nearly two centuries of the Christian era. Now they are proud of that ancient Roman

connection. They prospered under the Romans, and claim a certain kinship with the Vlachs, many of whom are to be found at Ochrida, who speak a Latin language allied to that of Rumania. The Vlachs are a pastoral people of rather uncertain origin, but they are probably of mixed Illyrian and Roman descent. Although Albania formed a part of the Serbian Empire in the days when Kossovo and Metoya were the Serbian strongholds, there is hereditary race hatred between the two nationalities such as might preclude the idea of any peaceful settlement by amalgamation. When the power of the Turk over Kossovo and Skutari (Schkodra) fell in 1479, Albania turned her eyes to the west. She joined the Venetians. She has looked to the west ever since for support in the most troublous times of her history, and the coast of Italy is said to be even now dotted with Albanian villages. The worst troubles of this distressful country have arisen in the past from religious persecution, and it is regrettable, but apparently true, that Christian persecutions have been as bad as Muhammadan. It was a Greek bishop who excommunicated the Albanian language! The general conversion of the country to the faith of Islam appears to have had a bad effect generally, but it has not made a Turk of the Albanian.

GREECE

Divided from Albania by the heights of Grammos, from Serbia by those of the Nidje Plavina, and from Bulgaria by a very significant series of mountain

water-partings, which are, however, split by the Struma River and the Mesta (or Kara Su), are found the Macedonian provinces of Greece. The extraordinary complexity of the elements which compose the Macedonian population is only equalled by the historical uncertainty of its boundaries. As they have existed since 1913, Macedonia is the north-eastern extremity of Greece, and is represented practically by the province of Salonika, extending from Thessaly to the lower Mesta and including the basins of the Bistrizza and the lower Vardar, thus cutting off Serbia from the sea. The Macedonia of the Turks at the beginning of the century included the whole basin of the Vardar as well as the upper tributaries of the Morava, beyond which extended the Turkish sandjak of Novibazar, which was interpolated between Serbia and Montenegro to prevent coalition of the Slav peoples. In modern Macedonia are to be found Jews, Turks, Levantines, and Greeks, besides Serbs and Bulgarians, in sufficient numbers to serve as the justification for a demand for extended territory on racial grounds on the part of any of those communities. We may, therefore, dismiss the racial question in dealing with future problems of geographical redistribution. The claim of Serbia to a port of her own on the Ægean in default of any commercial access to the Adriatic is hardly to be denied. The whole valley of the Vardar should belong to Serbia just as the whole valley of the Vistula should belong to the Poles. Neither country will ever be contented with less than the power to develop their own economic resources by free commercial

traffic through their own seaports. Possibly this may be effected without the transfer of so large a slice of Greece as would be represented by the basin of the Bistriza, but it is difficult to suggest a partition farther east which would secure the Monastir-Salonika railway and the Salonika port. If the claim of Bulgaria to that part of Greece which lies east of Salonika, including the port of Kavalla and the rich districts of Serres, were ignored (as they probably will be), there is no difficulty in suggesting a geographical boundary for Eastern Serbia which would render that country compact and secure whilst immensely shortening the line at the expense of Bulgaria. Instead of striking south-west from the Vidlich group of mountains, the Eastern Serbian boundary might follow the true divide (crossed by the Dragoman Pass) between the Struma basin and that of the Isker to a junction with the Rhodope mountains, and follow the north-eastern rim of the Mesta to the sea. This, indeed, would be a great improvement, from the scientific point of view, on the present irregular line, and it would involve the transfer of the whole Macedonian province to Serbia. Bulgaria would lose the basins of the Struma and the Mesta, but would secure, equally with Serbia, a fine defensive boundary—a boundary which it would be most difficult to violate. The fate of Macedonia, then, is the greatest problem in the Balkan settlement, and the difficulty is that of compensation to Greece which must be found elsewhere than in the Balkan area. The importance of the position which Greece holds as a maritime state in overlooking the Eastern Mediter-

ranean can hardly be exaggerated. Within rapid striking distance of the coasts of Syria, Asia Minor, Egypt, and Africa, with a seafaring population and a rugged coast-line of vast extent, the capacity of Greece for mischief on our line of approach to Suez and the East is considerable. These are days when the whole question of sea command is subject to great changes in distribution of power and method —changes the ultimate issue of which cannot be foreseen, but of which we have already experienced most disquieting symptoms, and which will exercise all the ingenuity of our greatest maritime advisers and authorities to regulate to our own advantage. The period of big ships, of heavy armour defence, and of powerful guns seems to be on the wane, and the dawn is apparently breaking of another phase of sea power, which indicates the value of long lines of rugged coast, and the opportunity thus afforded of making unrestricted use of the submarine, against which the powerful and expensive Dreadnought with its paraphernalia of guns and armour can never be fairly matched. Coast-lines must, in future, be regarded from a new point of view. Hitherto they have served defensive purposes with the assistance of strong forts and far-reaching artillery. These defensive positions still prove, on the whole, superior to attack from the sea, for the excellent reason that ships can be sunk and fortresses cannot, but they will now have to be reckoned in terms of opportunity, not so much for the construction of submarines as for their maintenance. With such a coast-line as that possessed by Greece, and by the multiplicity of the

islands which are scattered over the *Ægean*, there is such opportunity almost without limit, and it would be difficult indeed to say how far Greece in the unregenerate days of her monarchy has not contributed to the destruction of transports and liners traversing the Mediterranean on the service of Britain, France, and Italy. The occupation of Salonika and the pressure so gently brought to bear upon Greece as an unscrupulous friend of Germany in the present War by the presence of an allied force there has not only held up the Bulgarians, overawed the Royalist Greek Army, and made a revolution in favour of a friendly democracy possible, but it has undoubtedly led to the curtailment of the submarine menace and strengthened our whole Near Eastern position thereby. Greece is essentially a maritime country. Her mercantile fleet has grown enormously during the last quarter of a century, so much so that Greek ships are largely employed by British firms, and the foundations have been laid for what may be considered the best half of a powerful Navy by the seafaring education given to her people in the merchant service. Greece, then, has certainly to be reckoned with in the Balkan settlement, and the more clearly her interests can be proved identical with those of Britain the better. Modern Greece possesses many natural advantages besides her coast-line. The climate is generally delightful, and she has unusual facilities for the production of a great variety of fruits and crops. No season can ever be an entirely bad one for the harvests of Greece, there always being compensation. More than half the population of Greece

is employed in agriculture, there being no great development of manufacturing industries. Pasturage is abundant and is spread over a great part of the cultivable soil, and a comparatively new phase of intensive market-gardening has greatly increased the fruit output. So rich is the soil that it is said that Thessaly alone can grow enough cereals for the whole country. Railway communication, too, has increased since the beginning of the century, when there were only 600 miles of line open, but it is still inadequate. There are two lines into Thessaly from Volos, one of which connects the port with Larissa and the other runs to Trikala in the north-west, from which place there is road connection with Janina in Epirus across the Pindus range. From Athens you may pass by the Isthmus of Corinth (which is necessarily a railway centre) into the Central Morea, or you may circle round by the north and north-west, skirting the coast to Patros and Pyrgos and passing Olympia, join the local extension from the port of Kalamata on the south at the head of the Gulf of Messenia. The line which was projected early in the century to connect Larissa by the western coast of the Gulf of Salonika with Gada on the Monastir-Salonika railway may also be complete by this time. Further extension from Monastir via Ochrida through Albania to Durazzo or Valona may eventually be effected, but there are great physical difficulties to be encountered in the Albanian mountains ere it is completed. It will be a most important line, linking the Adriatic with Salonika. Finally there is the main connection between Salonika and Constantinople.

This first runs northward from Salonika to the Serbian frontier, then turning east passes through Serres to the eastern borderland between Macedonia and Bulgaria, crossing the Struma and the Mesta *en route* to Xanthi and Dede Agach. From this latter Bulgarian port it follows the Maritza valley to a junction with the Adrianople-Constantinople line at Kuleli Burgas. The fact that Macedonia is traversed from west to east, *i.e.* from Monastir to the Bulgarian frontier, by this important main line greatly emphasizes its value to Greece, which value will, of course, be largely accentuated if Monastir is connected with the Adriatic, for this would open up a new through route between Western Europe and Constantinople which would be well out of reach of Germanic influences.

Considering the enormous extent of the Grecian coast-line, it is remarkable how few important ports she possesses. The Piræus is, of course, the most important, and all the Levantine trade centres there. Besides Piræus there is the port of Volos in the Bay of Salonika and Kalamata in Messinia. Zante in the Ionian islands and Hermopolis in the island of Syros in the Cycladian group are the only ports of significance in the Grecian islands. It is strange how little these islands now figure in either naval or military strategic considerations. Corfu is on the commercial and social decline. The Albanian coast ports trade with France and Marseilles, and it is said now that there are no visitors to bring wealth into Corfu and no brigands to lend it romance. The concentration of Levantine trade on the Piræus, and the general

want of internal communications, renders the blockade of Greece by a foreign naval power a comparatively simple naval problem. The simplicity of it will become greatly complicated if full use is ever made of the opportunities afforded by the coast-line of the mainland and of the numerous islands which form the group of the Cyclades for the development of the submarine naval power. Full of classical and antiquarian interest and of picturesque beauty as are these islands (especially Naxos and Delos), it remains for future Greek administrations (in whatever form they may eventually crystallize) to make strategic use of these naval opportunities as joint-guardians with Italy of the eastern Mediterranean.

It would appear, therefore, that it is very important to the interests of Britain's communications with the East via the Suez Canal that friendly relations should be maintained with Greece, quite apart from that sentimental attitude which has been assumed in the past by statesmen influenced by its beauty and romance. Greece is now a land of sailors and of maritime opportunity, and may become a very practical factor in the great question of sea command, so that, doubtless, efforts will be made to secure the permanent friendship of Greece and her people (who have always been well disposed towards us) by the satisfaction of her ideals and aspirations when the War is over. The transfer of Macedonia to Serbia, which appears to be the only satisfactory solution of the Serbian problem of an open port in the Ægean in the interests of the possible federation of the Jugo-Slav states, is certainly no part of the Grecian ideal,

and it would, undoubtedly, lead to claims for compensation elsewhere. This is one of the great difficulties of satisfactory Balkan settlement. It will be much more difficult to meet the rival aspirations of Greece and Serbia than those of Serbia and Italy. It is true that we do not owe much to Greece for her assistance in the present War. On the contrary, the doubtful attitude of Greece has partly necessitated the employment of an army (much wanted elsewhere) to overawe the Royalist supporters of the late King and to emphasize the effect of the blockade. Had Greece loyally maintained her friendship with Serbia and fulfilled her clear obligations, it is certain that Bulgaria would not have been able to make good her occupation of Serbia without far greater difficulties and losses than she has so far sustained. We owe nothing to the Greece of recent history, but we may owe much to her in future, where are boundless possibilities which point to the necessity of a permanent understanding. What, then, could be offered to Greece as an equivalent for Macedonia? There is in the first place Crete. Under other conditions of international relations Crete was (as we all know) offered to Greece, and Greece declined the offer. Does it follow that she would do so now? Then, again, there is the most difficult problem of the disposal of the Turkish province of Adrianople should the Turks be finally driven from Europe into Asia Minor. Greece has ever maintained her commercial interests on the western shores of the Black Sea. There was a time in comparatively ancient history when Greek colonies extended far to the east

along the Euxine and commerce with Central Asia was almost entirely in their hands. At present there are still Greek colonies, and an active and enterprising Greek community occupies a large space on the Black Sea borders, especially at Burgas and Varna. There is therefore a certain basis of ethnical fitness in the suggestion that Greece should occupy the hinterland of the Black Sea and hold the approaches to Constantinople from the Maritza River eastwards.¹ The alternatives to this suggestion seem to be obvious. Either the Turks must remain where they are and still be a power in Europe, or Bulgaria must step in and annex the rich province of Adrianople. Neither alternative is to be regarded as a satisfactory termination to a conflict in which Bulgaria and Turkey have joined hands with Germany in the prosecution of her determination to secure Constantinople and the road to the East. They would, in fact, still command the situation. With Constantinople safeguarded by the Allies a Greek occupation of the province of Adrianople would be an effectual check to Bulgaria. A third prospect of meeting Greek aspirations is to be found in Asia Minor, where Greece has already formulated claims that can at present only be considered as visionary. She claims the coast of Asia Minor from Mitylene to Cape Finska, backed by a hinterland which is carried

¹ A curious tradition exists in Constantinople to the effect that the altar in the cathedral of St. Sophia, before which High Mass was being celebrated when the Turks first swarmed into the cathedral after the capture of the city, disappeared suddenly at their approach. It will reappear again miraculously when Greek domination is restored and Greek priests can finish the celebration of the Mass interrupted 500 years ago.

to Mount Olympus eastward from the coast; from Mount Olympus the limit of her claim was to Mount Sultan and thence by mountain ridges to the sea at Cape Finska. This embraces an area of not less than 50,000 square miles and effectually disposes of Smyrna as an alternative Turkish capital to Constantinople. It would leave the southern seaboard of the Sea of Marmora unallocated to any state, and opens up the prospect of endless conflict with the Turks. In the interests of future international peace such a claim can hardly find many advocates amongst the Allies.

CHAPTER VIII

POLAND

Of Poland it may be said that its history and its destinies are written on the face of the land. Probably no country in the world illustrates more forcibly the disastrous effects of bad boundaries than does Poland. Her destinies have been shaped and determined to a greater extent than those of any other European country by her geographical position in relation to neighbouring states. It is an unfortunate position to occupy. Combined with a provincial situation which places her between two most powerful continental empires as a sort of provisional buffer in times of peace, her borders are undistinguished by any topographical features which might enable her to make defence against aggression, and her flat plains and open waters present no better obstacle to an overrunning foe than that which is afforded here and there by river swamps and inland marshes.

Poland till the end of the eighteenth century was a large and powerful kingdom. It once included Lithuania (which reached from the Baltic

to the Black Sea), together with the basins of the Warta, Vistula, Durna, Dnieper, and Dniester, with Ruthenes (sometimes called Red Russians), White Russians, Lithuanians, and the Baltic Slavs in its Slavonic embrace. The early story of the country is romantic and full of legends, but when history breaks through the twilight of tradition we find the Poles living in a sort of democratic communion as a great agricultural people. Gradually from this early form of social existence there emerge three distinct classes, *i.e.* the nobility; the superior peasant class, who were free; and the inferior peasants, who were serfs and the property of their masters. The trade of the country was then, as ever, in the hands of the Jews. In A.D. 963 we begin to get a fuller light. Poland was then conquered by Germany, and had eventually to adopt Christianity under compulsion. The country was elevated to the dignity of a monarchy, and the king was crowned by Germany, but always, it should be observed, as a fief of the German Empire. In the eleventh century all the Western Slavonic states were absorbed into Poland, including Bohemia. About this period, owing to the death of the heir to the throne, there intervened a long period of anarchy, during which several provinces were lost to Russia. At a somewhat later period Prussia was defeated and the German Emperor, Henry V., driven to flight after a fierce battle near Breslau, where it is said that dogs collected in such numbers to eat the fallen Germans as to render the place unsafe for travellers for a long time afterwards. After this Poland was again free. In 1241 the

Monguls invaded Poland, but were ultimately diverted to Hungary. It is on record that the then King of Poland, Boleslaw, hid in a monastery as long as they remained. But Prussia was always the principal foe, Russia in these times being further removed and less developed. Such numbers of Germans settled in Poland as almost to denationalize the country even then. All the trade was in the hands of Germans or Jews. At the beginning of the fourteenth century Poland and Bohemia were united in one kingdom and maintained a constant fight against the "Teutonic knights." In 1312 Krakau became the capital of Poland when Kasimir III. came to the throne. This was Poland's golden age. Dantzig and Krakau joined the Hanseatic League, many towns sprung into existence on the Vistula, and we first hear of Warsaw. Krakau University was founded in 1364 by Kasimir, who continued the everlasting struggle with Lithuanians, Russians, and Monguls on one side and Germany on the other. In spite of perpetual war on the borderland, under a wise ruler Poland grew and prospered. Lithuania was added to Poland in the fourteenth century by the marriage of the Polish Queen to the Lithuanian Grand Duke. This Queen, Jadwiga, is one of the romantic figures in Polish history. She was not only beautiful, but good. Her Lithuanian husband was an uncultivated boor, and she hated him with a bitterness that was surprising in so amiable a character. This was the lady who is credited with an ingenious and historic device for punishing slanderers. Of course she did not escape slander herself, but she

boldly confronted her traducers, and, refuting their accusations, she made them grovel on the ground under a table barking like dogs and protesting that in slandering her they had lied like dogs—which is a libel on dogs. This weird custom survived till quite lately. In 1444 the King of Poland (Wladislaw), who was a fine soldier (this indeed was traditional amongst the Polish kings), was badly beaten by the Turks at Varna and lost four-fifths of his army. It appears to have been his own fault for breaking a treaty previously made with the Turks greatly to his own advantage and the extension of his kingdom. He was only twenty-one when he died in this battle. His brother-in-law, the Grand Duke of Lithuania, succeeded him and continued the defence of Poland against Prussia. It was about this time that a consolidated Russia appears on the scene under Ivan III. Poland was herself consolidated in the eighteenth century. The sixteenth century was notable chiefly for its religious animosities and struggles. It was in this century that another picturesque figure occupies the Polish stage in the form of the elected King, Henry of Valois. He appears to have been little better than a Royal black-guard. He never for an instant meant to adhere to the oaths taken at his election as king. He married without the consent of his Polish senate, which was a terrible crime; and he finally selected the opportunity afforded by a Royal banquet of great magnificence to make a straight bid for France and freedom by running away. He was, in fact, heir to the throne of France at the time of his deser-

tion, which may be some excuse for him, but the attractions of Vienna waylaid him and he appears never to have reached France at all. Thus the fortunes of Poland fluctuated under a series of more or less incompetent rulers, until in 1674 the great patriot and hero of Poland arose—John Sobieski. He was a most valiant and successful soldier before he was elected king. He lives in history not merely as a Polish patriot, but as the man who saved Europe and civilization from the power of the Turk. The story of that brilliant victory before Vienna, when John Sobieski went out to fight in full battle array with his shield borne before him; and the terrific onslaught on the Turks made by the Poles, who were aroused to fury by the spectacle of the Turkish chief sitting under a vast green silk tent reposefully taking coffee with his sons, will last whilst the world lasts. John Sobieski was a world hero, and with his death, which took place some years after, perished the glory of Poland. Frederick Augustus of Sweden overran the country for the second time and took Krakau early in the eighteenth century. The condition of the country then became deplorable. The weak King Stanislaw Augustus, who came to the throne in 1764 and who found his only recreation in shooting dogs from the palace windows in Warsaw, put the limit to monarchical incompetence. Russia, Prussia, and Austria divided Poland between them, that unhappy country, as one historian puts it, “having always suffered from want of natural frontiers”; nothing was left but a proud nobility and the lowest serfs. There was no backbone—no middle

class, no national spirit, no sympathy between the classes—Jews dominated and held all the commerce in their hands. The Prussian share of the spoil was Posen and certain Balkan provinces. Austria took Galicia. Russia was contented with White Russia, but in 1794 occupied Warsaw. Out of the debris Napoleon formed the Duchy of Warsaw and annexed it to Saxony. A resettlement of Poland took place under the Treaty of Vienna in 1814. Krakau was made an independent republic, but was annexed by Austria in 1846. All ancient Poland went to Russia and became the Vistula province. The Poles revolted in 1863, but they had no organized army. They were full of patriotism but utterly inefficient in action. The revolution was stamped out with vigour and much cruelty by Mouravieff, the General of the Czar Alexander, and this was the end of Polish independence.

Poland is but a slice in a vast European undulating plain, which reaches from the Brandenburg lowlands on the west and stretches eastwards till it loses itself in the central plains of Russia, only rising into topographical significance as the Carpathians are approached on the south. There, in the south, is concentrated all that is best and bravest of Polish scenery, forming a fitting environment to the most stirring and romantic episodes of her history. The chequered story of Poland, the story of one long struggle for freedom, which has been sketched above, still remains enshrined in the hearts of all Polish patriots. The fate of Poland has still to be determined, and we may look to it as full of the promise of stirring action,

even when this War shall close. As the plains of Poland (officially known, till lately, as the Russian territory of the Vistula) rise gradually southwards from the normal 300 or 400 feet above sea-level to about 1000 feet, when they merge into a plateau land which reaches to the Carpathian foothills, they become forest covered with oak and beech, and are broken and rifted by the depressions of streams and rivers which are always picturesque, and there is some of the grandeur of mountain scenery. Towards the east of this southern territory we are told that the peculiar characteristics of Polish land conformation are found in the thick, impenetrable woods and forests combined with impassable marshy tracts which distinguish so large an area of the plains. The Vistula takes its rise in the Carpathians south of these southern uplands, its upper reaches being bordered by the Lublin and Sandomir ridges, which form an extension of the hills of Northern Galicia. In the Sandomir are ridges which run to over 1500 feet in height. This for Poland is a great altitude. In the southern distance rise the Galician group of the Beskides, and parallel to them, with a strike to the south-east on the Polish frontier, run several minor ranges, the highest summits of which are known as the Holy Cross mountains. The mineral wealth of Poland lies in these hills of its south-west frontier. So far the general character of the Polish landscape partakes of the wildness and charm of Carpathian scenery, but as these southern hills gradually merge into the central plains, typical Poland is exhibited in all its uninteresting nakedness. Vast

plains stretch away to a misty horizon, and through them, in loops and curves, great rivers wind lazily, here spreading out into lakes and marshes, and there bordered by sandy wastes supporting a scanty scrub. The country is largely a scene of lonely desolation. Through large tracts no villages or homesteads exist for miles around, no pastures, no hedges—nothing—just arid waste land, with here and there a group of stunted trees and wide spaces of coarse, rank, swamp-bred vegetation. Such appear to be the most striking characteristics of this land of unrealized ideals.

The general character of flatness and swamp of the central regions indicates a lake origin in no very remote geologic age, and it is the alluvial deposits of these prehistoric lakes that furnish the value of Polish soil for wheat cultivation. Polish rivers are only navigable for a few months in the year, but they form nevertheless most important commercial arteries, connecting Poland by canals both with Russia on the east and Germany on the west. Within Russian Poland the Vistula is connected with the Niemen; the Bzura tributary of the Vistula is connected with the Warta, of which river the bed has been altered to facilitate irrigation. Not even Holland has made better use of its flat outlines than has Poland. On the other hand, railway communication has been neglected, and Poland's facilities for the rapid mobilization and concentration of troops for the defence of her frontier are practically insignificant. The flat plains of Poland extend northward to the southern slopes of a swelling upland,

rising to 700 or 800 feet above sea-level, which intervenes between Poland and the Baltic. One province of Poland, that of Sawalki, projects north-eastward over the surface of this upland to the upper Niemen, which forms its eastern boundary. In these northern regions are repeated the prevailing characteristics of wide plains dotted with lakelets connected by slow-moving streams, and intersected here and there by peat-bogs, marshes, and sandy spaces with occasional patches of fertility and rugged pine forest. The geographical position of the province of Sawalki, jutting out irregularly to Kovno and intervening between East Prussia and Russia, completes the Polish buffer between Germany and Russia. To the west of the Vistula, which intersects Poland from south to north, the prevailing features are much the same. Below Warsaw the Vistula meanders through flat plains, changing its course from time to time, vast swamps and marshes lying to the west about Kalisz and bordering the Warta. Through the great central plains the Vistula flows north and north-west, with an average width of about 1000 yards, but it is liable to most extensive floods, due partly to the accumulation of ice in its lower reaches, and partly to the Carpathian rainfall, so that its waters occasionally spread out to 150 miles east of the river. It is still excavating its bed and possibly raising it, so that, like the Indus and many other large rivers, it may eventually flow at a higher level than the plains. Such rivers seldom have important towns near their banks. Cracow (Krakau), Sandomir, Warsaw, Plock (which has changed its bank), Ivan-

gorod, and Modlin are the chief towns on the Vistula, which finally cuts through the rising ground south of the Baltic, and joins that sea near Dantzig. It is navigable for small boats from Krakau to the sea, but the chief traffic is to be found below the middle reaches of the river where a large trade in corn, wool, and timber is maintained yearly by its navigation. Poland, surrounded on three sides by Germanic powers and on the fourth by Russia, has never possessed good boundaries of her own although she has certainly contributed to safeguard the frontier of Russia, and it should be clear from this very cursory description of Poland's geographical conformation and the main features of that country that nowhere, except on the south, can we find geographical features which would assist in the maintenance of a really strong defensive boundary.

Rivers and marshes are of little use for such a purpose, and yet we find rivers everywhere pressed into the service as Polish boundaries and practically no defensive frontier at all. Thus, on the north, where the borderland is dominated by East Prussia, we find that for thirty miles or so the Drewenz River forms the boundary. For the next twenty-five miles, as far as the Swkra, this boundary follows an irregular course, and then for twenty miles it again takes to the river to Soldau, where it leaves the river to run an incomprehensible course (possibly dictated by marshes) parallel to the river till it touches the head of the Orzyez, flowing south. A wide sweep across country for forty-five to fifty miles crossing many river heads carries it to the Narew. Here it is helped along by a

level stream for fifteen miles, and then assumes a cross-country course to a lake east of Lyck. North of this part of the boundary is the great marsh region where the Russians met with the Tannenberg disaster; south of it are open plains extending to the Bug River and the Vistula. Such a boundary as this furnishes no opportunity for a check to aggression, and becomes a mere local definition. It is crossed by two main routes southward, one running to Mlawa and the other along the line of the Lyck valley. The western boundary of Poland may be said to be a river all the way, as it is defined almost entirely by the Prosna and its affluents. It presented little more difficulty than did the northern boundary to German invasion, which was, of course, largely assisted by an admirable system of lateral railways with terminal stations at least seven points directed towards the Polish border. Magnificent as was the military conception of the German strategy which led the way to Warsaw, it must be admitted that it was greatly helped by the geographical conformation of Polish boundaries both in the north and west. They have proved (if proof is wanting) that rivers (even as formidable as the Danube) are no protection against aggression.

The southern boundary of Poland is one which offers more opportunity for delaying a military advance than that of the north or west. The western section of it which is designed to cut off the ancient capital Krakau from Poland is irregular and weak where it follows an unimportant affluent of the Prosna, but the line of the Vistula (which here traverses a rugged plateau country and runs deep)

forms some exception to the general inefficiency of the Polish river boundaries, and with the assistance of the San might be made really useful. From the San eastwards the irregularity of the line suggests that it is based on those rugged spurs and minor ridges which indicate the northern termination of the Galician plateau. However weak this may be, it is a better definition than a flat river-bed. The weakness of the Galician frontier to the east of Poland in extension of these southern borders has been well illustrated by the events of the War. Austria found to her cost that the annexation of Galicia as a Crown Colony beyond the defensive line of the Carpathians seriously weakened her frontier and her power of resistance against so redoubtable an enemy as Russia. When Galicia was lost in the early phases of the War it needed all the strength of German reinforcements to restore the balance (at an enormous cost) in favour of the Central Powers. In strong contrast to the weakness of the river boundaries of Poland and Galicia does the much-battered wall of the Carpathians stand out. No mountain range in history has been called upon to exercise a more momentous influence on the phases of a gigantic military struggle than have the Carpathians and the Transylvanian Alps; and yet in the scale of altitude they by no means rank high. The eastern boundary of Poland, which is but a nominal provincial partition, needs little reference. The flat and open rivers which represent that line—the Niemen with its affluent, and the upper Narew and the Bug—have been crossed by hostile armies again and again. The line of Russian fortresses

extending from Kovno on the north to Brest-Litovsk on the Bug forms a defensive frontier to Russia on the west, dominating this eastern boundary of Poland. With such an assortment of weak river boundaries and open frontiers Poland has not only been unable in the past to retain her independence after the fashion of other small states with better geographical conditions (Switzerland for instance), but has suffered the inevitable result of such weakness in the gradual and peaceful irruption of her neighbours on all sides. Advocates of river boundaries see in this process of ethnographical admixture the dawning of a general commingling of the nations when less peoples shall be swallowed up by greater, and a process of assimilation shall develop which will co-ordinate varied communities into one universal brotherhood with common ideals and aspirations. Such a result, however desirable, is not within a measurable distance of time in this age of competition and national expansion which leads to such an extraordinary admixture of races on the international borderlands. It is no matter of surprise that Poland should find herself permeated by German immigrants on the west and (in a much less degree) on the north, and by Lithuanians and Ruthenes on the east, but the problem of a new Poland—a Poland of independence and self-government—is greatly complicated thereby. That both Russia and Germany are anxious to make of Poland an independent and protected buffer-land between them is beyond question. Both have made proposals for it. Germany, as usual, is first in the field with details of actual administration designed

to win Polish support, whilst Russia puts forward promises more comprehensive and more effective towards the establishment of Polish autonomy in the future. Both want the buffer, but the question of an independent buffer is doubtful. There can, however, be little doubt that the end of the War will see Poland restored as a protected (if not independent) state, and the point at issue is whether Germany or Russia is to guarantee the protection. In either case I doubt whether there will be any great shifting of boundaries either on the east or west.

The Poles are chiefly gathered in the true Poland of the Vistula basin from the Carpathians to the Baltic. There they form a large majority (about 65 per cent) of the total population. From the very dawn of history Slavonian Poles, mixed with Lithuanians, have been found in the plains of the Vistula and Warta. The present type is found in the middle Vistula valleys and in Posen. In the north-east we find Lithuanians, and in the south-east there is a slight Russian admixture. The Poles have, in the past, bitterly opposed Russian domination, but there is no sign at present that they prefer German. The main preoccupation of the nation as a whole before the War was to establish the Polish state against the menace of Czardom. On the 5th November 1916, after much hesitation, Austria and Germany first proclaimed Polish Independence. There followed the Russian Revolution, and the Russian Provisional Government, also, proclaimed an independent Polish state.¹ The national democratic element in Poland endorsed the universal demand for immediate inde-

pendence, but they added a claim for strict neutrality in the War and for general peace. I believe, however, that the Polish Socialist Democracy now realizes (in the words of a Polish Socialist) that "true national independence can only come through the common fight of all the peoples of Europe for final emancipation both political and economic," and, like Russia, Poland looks to the social democracy of all Europe for a common struggle to abolish the root causes of imperialism; for she realizes that, till that is accomplished, no genuine independence can be gained by Poland or any other small Kingdom. Meanwhile, how does Poland regard the position held by Germany in her Councils of the State? The Polish Provisional Council of State, which was meant to be a real factor in the Government, demand that the promises made by the Central Powers on the 5th November 1916 should be redeemed. But the Germans, as might be expected, show very great reluctance to giving up any part of the administration of the country into the hands of the Poles. Further, they subjected the country to what is politically termed "economic exploitation," which is better expressed, perhaps, as public robbery, and have assumed an aggressive attitude which has undoubtedly been strengthened by the Russian Revolution. Nevertheless, after innumerable shufflings and delays, the Polish Council of State has been able to formulate certain propositions, and has definitely agreed to the formation of a Polish army, which army it maintains should be dependent entirely on the Polish authorities. Difficulties having arisen about the nature of the oath to be administered, a

proclamation was issued on the 14th July to the effect that the Council of State assume the highest national authority over the Polish army. They also declare that they regard an early peace as favourable to Poland, and, finally, they maintain the theory of Polish neutrality—all of which, at present, is subject to German agreement.

But there are within the quasi-political boundaries of Poland millions of others than Poles whose attitude towards government reconstruction will certainly demand consideration. The Jews, for instance (perhaps a million and a quarter), are frankly pro-German, and may be balanced in the expression of their will with the million of immigrants from Great and Little Russia; but there are quite a million of immigrant Germans who have settled over a breadth of twenty-five to fifty miles on the western border, and who dominate the manufacturing interests of the country from that German Birmingham, Lodz, who will combine with the Jews to form a strong anti-Russian faction, and who, if they support a Polish army, will inevitably demand its use in German interests. All this confliction of interests will immensely complicate the question of what part of Europe at the close of the War is to be the future Poland. The mutual desire of Germany and Russia to have an effective barrier between them in Europe in the shape of a territorial buffer, where geographical dispositions have denied the possibility of a natural wall of partition, is easily explained if we consider how the future military strength of these two nations will eventually be balanced. From the military

point of view geographical dispositions will always prevent Poland from being an effective buffer or international barrier. To be really useful no buffer should occupy a position liable to be easily turned ; so that, granting the continuance of its present eastern and western boundaries, it would have to be a Poland reaching from the Carpathians to the Baltic in order to fulfil the purpose of an effective barrier. Most important would it be that Galicia should be under the same domination as Poland so as to bring the Carpathians into position as part of the southern boundary. On the north the claims of security are no less comprehensive. The irregular projection of the province of Sawalki brings Polish territory to within seventy-five miles of the sea already, and the cession of a small area of East Prussia north of the river Memel (including the port of the same name) would answer the purpose of locking the German gateway effectually.

When we examine the western boundary of Poland we see that the ethnographic problem is of a great importance and great complexity, and proves conclusively the necessity for a geographical barrier as the first factor in the division of international properties. There is no such barrier to be found on the western Polish frontier, and the result is that whatever may have been the extent of German irruption across that frontier into Russian Poland, the counter-immigration of Poles from the Vistula basin into Germany has been as great, if not greater. In the south-west only a corner of Silesia is occupied by Poles to the extent of from 50 per cent of the population. The provincial majority of Silesia is in

favour of Germany ; but nearly the whole state of Posen beyond the Vistula, and of East Prussia reaching northward to the Baltic in a line west of Dantzig, is ethnographically Polish, that is to say, that Poles to the number of from 50 per cent to 100 per cent of the population would almost certainly predominate. East of Dantzig, in the basin of the lower Vistula, the Poles are in a distinct minority. They are also in a minority in East Prussia, only the southern territories of that province (about one-fourth the provincial area) containing a majority population of Poles. If the problem of the western boundary of Poland is to be regarded from purely the racial or national point of view (and there are no geographical objections), and the destinies of that part of Europe are to be decided by the "will of the majority," all the province of Posen, and presumably that of East Prussia also, would be included in the New Poland, with their provincial boundaries consolidated and made good as national boundaries. A new Poland which stretched from the Carpathians to the Baltic would then be evolved (assuming Galicia as its southern extension), which would undoubtedly be the most effective buffer-state between Germany and Russia that could possibly be devised. It would probably lead to enormous economic developments in Poland, and Dantzig would arise to first-class commercial importance. The obvious difficulty is the resultant position of the East Prussian province with Königsberg as its capital. This province would then exist as an isolated corner of Germany cut off by intervention of Polish territory from the rest of the German kingdom. Such a

political distribution will never be contemplated by Germany. The only logical conclusion, therefore, is that the end of the War will see Poland transferred from Russia to Germany as a quasi-independent protectorate, unless the Western Allies are in a position to interfere.

CHAPTER IX

RUSSIA

RUSSIA, a huge Colossus with feet of clay, still dominates the Middle East, and still has much to say to the political entanglements of the Near East. Harassed and torn by the throes of a revolution which is not altogether of domestic origin, but which owes much to a national disease, the effects of which may be traced in every country in Europe, we can hardly expect Russia to take a vigorous part in the great European settlement which will follow the War. The disease is that of insidious German influence, and the germs of it will take a century to eradicate. Many years ago, when I had the opportunity of service in High Asia, which brought me into close contact and acquaintance with the Russian soldier and his officer, I observed two things. I was struck with the blind, almost religious, adoration of the Russian soldier for the Czar—"the little Father"—who was to him the symbol of divine sovereignty; and I noted the detestation of the Russian officer for the ubiquitous German who pervaded the army, filled many of the highest appointments, and made

offensive use of his dominating position. When the Czar disappeared the moral of the army disappeared with him, and the insidious voice of the German propagandist found ready listeners amongst the men. But not amongst the officers. I have the profoundest faith in the loyal devotion to their country of all educated Russians. If we remember the story of the early episodes of the War, if we think of East Prussia, of the Bzura in front of Warsaw, of Galicia and the Carpathians, of Armenia and Erzerum and Trebizond ; taking count of the gallant generosity of Russia in ever striking when the pressure was most deadly on France or Italy ; remembering, too, the brilliant record of a group of generals who proved themselves equal to the best in Europe, I feel sure that Russia (in the words of a recent writer) is “but shedding her autumn leaves, the growth and strength of Russia is not dead ; the sap will rise again.” At any rate, Russia is, and must remain, such a dominant factor in the making of future history in the Near and in the Middle East that we cannot neglect her position in relation to those peoples and states which are directly contiguous to her frontiers both west and south. On the west she borders Poland, and there her geographical outlook is the same as that of Poland which we have already described. The same blank spread of flat or slightly undulating plain, where the Niemen and the Bug slide their way in lazy loops to the north ; the same wide wastes of marsh-land and intricate bog, through which only the experienced bog expert can find a way ; interspersed with the same patches of rich

alluvial soil, the heritage of departed seas and lakes which form the basis of Russia's wealth in wheat. To the north, towards the Baltic, in Kovno, as the plains swell upward, there is greater variety and more beauty in landscape scenery. To the south-west, across Galicia and Rumania, Russia looks to the distant Carpathians and southwards over the Black Sea.

The problems which concern Russia's frontier to the west and south-west, facing Europe, are as much ethnical in their issues as geographical. Geographically, we have already noted the weakness of the Polish frontiers, both west and east, a weakness which, so far as Russia is concerned, applies to her outlook towards Germany across the intervening Polish state, assuming that Poland becomes independent. Her line of great fortresses on the western river-bound front was designed as an interior line of defence against Germany, of which the first line was to be found in Poland, so that we may assume that with the promised independence of that country the old line of river boundary to the east of Poland will be the future eastern boundary of Germany, with the fortresses now in German hands duly restored. If there is to be an exception, it will only be under the conditions of a greater and stronger Poland, reaching from the Carpathians to the Baltic, and holding its Vistula outlet to the sea. Such an eventuality is only possible if the interests of both Germany and Russia demand that the buffer-land between them should be strong and defensible, with sufficient military strength of its own to ensure respect on

either side. But such an eventuality is hopeless, for it involves the difficulty (as I have already pointed out) that the province of which Königsberg is the chief town, a most important extension of East Prussia safeguarding the Baltic shores, in which the great majority of inhabitants are German-speaking people, would be cut off from Germany by the intervening extension of Poland to the mouth of the Vistula, and would occupy a position between Poland and Russia of such military weakness and commercial difficulty that its transfer to one or other of those powers would become almost a political necessity. It is quite clear that such a cession of territory on the part of Germany, which would be tantamount to the resignation of that command of the Baltic which she now maintains, will never take place unless Germany is absolutely crushed out of action. Geographically, this province is Polish rather than Russian, and present Russian diplomacy expresses no wish to assume new territorial responsibilities. A strong and vigorous German colony, alive with German sympathies and ideals, on the north-east of a new Poland would not conduce to the peace or the security of that country, and there arises, consequently, a problem in European reconstruction, the solution of which will be of the deepest interest. Will Poland extend her rights of independence over the Vistula delta to Dantzig and isolate Königsberg, or will she become a mere protectorate under Germany ? In the latter and most probable case Königsberg will remain German, and the details of administration in the various provinces will not

greatly differ from those now obtaining, except that there may be an excursion of German occupation to Riga and Reval.

To the south-east another geographical problem arises, but it is one which must have been well considered by European Powers for years, although the outcome of these considerations is by no means clear. For very many years past we have heard, and we know, that Russia has coveted Constantinople and the command of the Dardanelles exit from the Black Sea to the Mediterranean. It is not a matter of surprise that a vast country, such as Russia, should seek a warm-water outlet as a great commercial asset, if not a positive necessity to the development of her enormous agricultural interests. Sympathy in such aspirations has not been wanting, even in this country, but the paramount importance of retaining command of the Mediterranean (and incidentally of encouraging the Turk to assist us in maintaining it) has, so far, barred the fulfilment of Russia's purpose, even when it has seemed to be almost within her grasp. Now, however, the political atmosphere has changed, and I think I am right in saying that this aspiration of Russia would be rather encouraged by the European Entente Powers than otherwise were there any prospect of its realization. If we express the reason for this change in the simplest language, it is this. We were afraid of Russia; now we are no longer afraid. Since definite limits were set by the demarcation of boundaries to the process of Russian expansion in Asia, no acute form of Russo-nervousness has troubled our Councils. Russia has honourably

held to her engagements. And yet it was not so very long ago that we practically acquiesced in German schemes for fostering an *entente* with Turkey, which should result in promoting German influence far beyond Constantinople until it pervaded Syria and Mesopotamia ! When an agreement was negotiated between ourselves and Germany which would enable German capital and Turkish engineering skill to combine for the completion of the Constantinople-Bagdad-Basra railway, there could have been but one political motive for such complacency, and that was the desire to introduce a new and powerful factor into the problem of Russian expansion in Persia. But for the great potential value of the Persian oil-fields, I fear that we should have assisted Germany well on her way to Egypt and India. All that has been thrust by the War into the archives of ancient history, and now we would gladly welcome a Russian interference with the German programme. But can Russia now interfere ? There never was any opinion expressed in favour of interference by the Provisional Government at Petrograd ; but the obvious commercial advantage of the control of the Dardanelles remains just as obvious as ever, and whether or no a military occupation by Russia is contemplated on the basis of our complete victory over Germany, there can be little doubt that an open way through those historic gates will eventually be claimed. There are many reasons why Russia should not regard the military occupation of Constantinople by Russian troops as an unmixed blessing. Consider the geographical position. Constantinople is separ-

ated from the nearest land boundary of Russia (defined by the Danube outlet) by about 600 miles of territory which belongs partly to Rumania, partly to Bulgaria, and partly to Turkey. The road would pass from the Danube at Galatz through Siliestria and Rustschuk to Shumla and Adrianople. It is incredible that in times of peace such a route as this would be available for the constant passing to and fro of Russian troops. The command of Adrianople by Russia would be an eventuality which might possibly be met if the Turk is evicted from Europe, but the difficulty of land communication does not disappear with that of Adrianople. There are still Rumania and Bulgaria blocking the way. Clearly, then, communication must be maintained by sea, and the occupation of Constantinople depends on the command of the Black Sea. From Odessa to the northern mouth of the Bosphorus is only 400 miles, which under ordinary conditions would not involve more than a day's run. Russia already holds between the Danube mouth and Trebizond more than half the Black Sea littoral and such important naval stations as Odessa, Sebastopol, and Batum.¹ Thus she would easily retain her supremacy with little prospect of successful rivalry from Rumania, Bulgaria, or Turkey under those normal conditions of sea warfare to which we were accustomed before the War. But we must remember that sea warfare has already passed into a phase which we can no longer regard as normal. The western and southern coasts of the Black Sea

¹ Since this was written Odessa and Sebastopol have been occupied by Germany, and Batum has been ceded to Turkey.

offer innumerable opportunities for submarine bases, and a rigorous watch would be necessary to ensure that no such lurking menace were developed. The command of the sea in these days involves command of the coasts, and the command of the coasts is not always or everywhere practicable. Obviously there would be responsibilities, both naval and military, which Russia might prefer to share with others, so long as she secures that which has been the desire of her national soul for the last century, *i.e.* free egress to the Mediterranean from the Black Sea. Thus everything seems to point at present rather to a future international control of the straits than to the transfer of Constantinople, bodily, into Russia's keeping.

But Russia's difficulties in the reconstruction of her western frontier are by no means confined to the restoration of her boundaries and of her military position. Out of all the turmoil of domestic antagonisms and political contest arising from the revolution it is difficult, indeed, to determine what is the real will of the people, what unity of sentiments is to be found anywhere. It is not merely the distinctions of class which affects this question, but the ethnical divisions which split the great mass of Russia's humanity to pieces which are accountable for much of the disturbing element in this process of administrative evolution. There is happily one matter about which, if not absolute unanimity, much promise of general agreement prevails. That is the determination to keep Germany out of Russia, so that with the generally shrewd intelligence of the Russian soldier in matters which concern his own interests,

and with the splendid loyalty of his officers, we need hardly fear a final collapse of the Russian Army in the East so long as we prove that we are successful in the West. That, indeed, is the crux of the whole position.

Amongst the many local ethnical problems which have to be confronted by Russia's advisers, that of the Ukraines is perhaps typical, and a word or two may be said about them inasmuch as the Ukraine question is but indifferently understood. And yet one recent writer who knows describes it as one of the five main political problems which lie at the root of the World War. The word Ukraine is said to signify "border," but the borderland inhabited by Ukrainians to-day stretches far, from east of the Dnieper to the Sea of Azov and beyond. They are commonly known as Little Russians, or in Austria as Ruthenes, and they number about twenty-five millions on Russian soil, four millions in Galicia and Bukovina, and half a million in the Carpathian districts of Hungary. In the seventeenth century the Ukrainians were a loosely knit republican organization of Cossacks under a Hetman, but by the end of the eighteenth they were crushed and introduced to Russian administration and knew what was meant by serfdom. It was the partition of Poland which divided the Ukrainians and Ruthenes, but both are alike closer kinsmen of the Great Russians, both racially and linguistically than any other two branches of the Slavonic race. In 1905 the democratic movement in South Russia assumed a national Ukrainian form, which was practically a programme of national autonomy within

a federalized Russia. This brought their political interests into direct conflict with those of Poland, which insists on its own extreme historical limits and scouts the modern idea of Ukrainian nationality. The political contest between them has been bitter. The old democratic traditions of the Cossack Republic still remain with the Ukrainians. The focus of Ukraine national feeling has been at Lemberg, the capital of Galicia, where, in an Austrian Crown Colony, the struggle between Poles and Ukrainians has been so bitter as even to involve assassination. The result was that the Austrian Ukrainians were temporarily driven into alliance with certain German parties, but it seems as if they would now welcome a general federation with Czechs and Jugo-Slavs. Such is one of the problems which beset the Russian Government in its struggle towards democracy, and it illustrates the difficulty caused by racial separations and intermixtures, and of constructing from the scattered national units of which the Empire has been composed (each shouting for independence) a single powerful democracy, united in sentiment and ideal, a full power in the European comity of nations. It would almost seem as if even unity of sentiment on the subject of Germany and the War has failed to be a binding force.

THE COSSACKS

It is not at all improbable that in the course of revolutionary action and reaction in Russia we shall hear a great deal about the Cossacks. They form

the military caste in Russia. They are bound together by the ties of brotherhood-in-arms, and their service is not that of the conscripted soldier but of a complete military unit under their own headman, the Hetman (Attaman) or chief. It was my good luck on the borderland of Russia in Asia to be engaged in a geographical reconnaissance for the purpose of fixing the southern boundaries of Russia, which necessitated the employment of a considerable Cossack escort. The country was wild and inhospitable, the home of the Turkman nomad, where the great sea of red sand dunes stretches down from the Turkestan mountains to the Oxus. Brilliant in spring and summer with a carpet of flowers ; desolate and barren in winter when the autumn winds had shorn the land of all vegetation, collected the dried debris and stalks and leaves and rolled them in huge masses of dusty refuse into the local gullies and water-courses of the hills. Water was scarce and bitter with salt, and the snow blizzards would occasionally rise in the north-west and sweep the world into a whirling embrace of ice-cold darkness and deadly chill. The Cossacks were invaluable. I never heard a complaint, though I never could say what they might find in the way of accommodation at the end of the day's ride. They foraged for themselves and their horses. They shot birds and pigs when they could, and starved if there was nothing to shoot. In their cheeriness and invariable good humour, with their fair complexions (these Cossacks probably hailed from the Caucasus) and blue eyes, their love of adventure, and square-set, powerful figures, they

were more of the type of the best sort of English Tommy than of any foreign soldier that I have seen. Nothing stopped them. A broad and muddy river coming down in flood from the mountains created no special difficulty. With only one boat to carry their clothes they just stripped themselves naked and with their horses they swam that awful flood as if they liked it. An adventurous subaltern was very nearly drowned in his efforts to show the Cossacks the way across. Who are the Cossacks ? There is a community cognate with the Kirghiz of the northern steppes which is called Kazák, and from them they take the name. It means "freebooter," or horseman, and the Cossack from whatever part of Russia he hails is (or is the descendant of) a rebel against the Government. There are eleven Cossack centres called *voisko* scattered about Russia, and one or two of them have survived (like the "mir" or commune of the peasant) for centuries. Although by origin the Cossacks are simply peasants of Central Russia, they have banded themselves into a standing army for the purpose of holding the lands which they have won after years of struggle. As early as the sixteenth century they spread along the steppes of both Eastern Russia and of the Ukraine (between Moscow and Poland), and a powerful section of them moved as far as the river Don, where they occupied the flat and fertile lands of the Don province. Successive autocratic rulers of Russia have found in these warlike subjects a useful defence in the past against the Turks and Tartars of the south-east, and a very powerful military asset at all times. The Cossacks of the

Ukraine, under the historical Mazeppa, and also the Cossacks of the Don, rebelled against Peter the Great, but whilst the Ukraine Cossacks were eventually dispersed the Don Cossacks were found to be far too useful as guardians of the eastern frontier to be treated severely. The Ukraine Cossacks reformed themselves into the Kuban *voisko* east of the Black Sea, where they have been in constant feud with the Circassian tribes ever since. Now, however, there are certainly Caucasians to be found amongst them, for I have met men from the Caucasus who talked a dialect that very few understood, but which was certainly Caucasian. The Cossack tradition is strong in the Ukraine still, and meanwhile within the last two or three centuries Cossack *voiskos* have been formed in the Ural, several in Siberia, in Orenburg and Astrakan. The part played by the Cossacks in Russia's development has been so great and so useful that efforts have been made by repeated Governments to keep them apart from the peasants generally as a special military caste. The difference between them and the peasant lies chiefly in the nature of their military service. Every Cossack has to serve or pay a contribution to the funds of his community. He is freed from taxation and owns more land than the peasant—often more land than he can cultivate. This to a certain extent alienates him from the peasant class in the new democracy, and makes him a formidable factor in settling the country's disputes. Between the Cossack as I saw him on the Russian frontier and the ordinary peasant soldier of the line there was little in common as regards sentiment,

and no comparison as regards physique. The Cossack was much the finer man. It follows now that the Cossack is an all-important force in the domestic struggles of Russia to-day. Indeed I would venture to say that the final determination of the future rule and governance of Russia lies with the Cossacks. Any one trusted leader who can get together the Cossacks as a united body will probably decide the question, and should that leader be one of the great generals who, at the beginning of the War, so distinguished themselves by the conduct of the campaign in Galicia or in Asia Minor, it would not surprise me (when I remember the blind sentiment of semi-adoration that the Cossack had for the Czar) to see that Czar back again on the throne of Russia.

When the cloud shadows of this terrible War shall have gathered themselves together and rolled away, great changes will have taken place in international political relations. Many misunderstandings will have been cleared away. New alliances, new friendships, and a new outlook will be established with the dawn of a brighter day, and over no part of the world will that dawn break with more hopeful assurance for the future than over the Middle and the Far East. The greatest change of all, perhaps, and the one which is fullest of bright portent for the future lies in the fact that we shall have justified and established our position as the greatest Muhammadan power in the world. We shall have displaced that which for many centuries has stood for the centre of the faith of Islam. We shall have proved to the eyes of a

wondering Muhammadan world that the mantle of their prophets draped about the shoulders of an autocratic head of their faith is but an ineffectual covering for the sins of cruelty, lust, and incompetency. The might of our arms in Mesopotamia and the occupation of Bagdad have already affected the East profoundly in India, in Persia, in Afghanistan, and it is for us to see to it that the moral effect is lasting. We are not concerned with the religious aspect of the question. We are not posing as defenders of the faith of Islam, but as Christians. We have been fighting a good fight for Christianity—the greatest fight for Christianity that the world has ever seen—and in doing this we have maintained those principles of justice, loyalty, and humanity in which we have no right to claim a monopoly, for they are to be found, if we look for them, even amongst Muhammadans. Thus it is with the full assurance that our strength and power, if not our principles, will be recognized by the Muhammadan world for decades to come that we turn to enquire what will be the position of Russia in the Middle East after the War—as regards Persia and as regards India.

There was a time (not so very long ago) when any advance of Russia towards the coveted objective of Constantinople from any direction would have filled us with alarm. Not less were we nervous lest by diplomatic adroitness Russia should establish an understanding with Persia that would enable her to reach the Persian Gulf. It was, indeed, this danger which induced us to encourage German designs in the same direction—at least it is difficult to account

for that encouragement in any other way. Now we know, however, that whatever ambitions may have lurked in the secret councils of the Russian Empire, they were but child's play to those that were entertained in Germany where the Pan-German idea had taken root, and wanted nothing in the way of thoughtful scientific consideration and military care to give it practical effect. So completely have our views changed face that we now can only hope that Russia will keep what she has taken and preserve in Asia Minor a control which will bring the unhappy Armenians finally under her protection. But Russia's attitude has also changed. She no longer dreams of Constantinople (or says so), and although we may still hope that she will keep her hold on Erzerum and Trebizond, we may be assured that further forward movement either in Asia Minor or in Persia is far from her ambitions, nor can we imagine that throughout all her wide extended frontiers in Asia will any aggressive action, such as involves military support and the force of arms, be contemplated for many years to come. With the re-establishment of a central government, strong to maintain control in Asia as in Europe, we have nothing to fear ; but we cannot look into the future and we cannot tell how far the loosely held reins of government in the Turkman steppes and the Central Asiatic Khanates may serve to maintain order under a democracy which in Asiatic eyes, at any rate, is apt to be regarded as a poor substitute for autocratic rule. Persia, Bokhara, and Samarcand understand an emperor who fills their imagination and stands for supremacy, despot-

ism, and even for divine authority. It is this deep-rooted oriental sentiment which pervades the soldiers of the Russian Army, who are themselves oriental. Whether the Asiatic provinces and states of Russia will see in the momentous changes effected by the Russian Revolution an opportunity to strike for independence is a possibility which cannot be ignored. There is, in fact, a chance of complications on that frontier which may affect us more or less. Whether such complications eventuate or not our position will assuredly be that of maintaining the *status quo* wherever it may be possible to do so. It is therefore quite appropriate to refer briefly to what that status is as we understand it at present. In Asia Minor, Russia has advanced her borders westward over the greater part, if not all, of Armenia. Before her lies Anatolia, extending over most of the remaining mountain regions of Asia Minor and including the best of its fertile valleys. Russia's position is, so far, sound, for there can be no difficulty in defining an excellent containing boundary which will strengthen and support it. This advance is important in its bearing on Kurdistan and Upper Mesopotamia, independently of the relief that it may afford to the much-harassed Armenians. We have already experienced the full advantage of Russia's assistance on the Persian borderland in dealing with those rather haphazard revolutions organized by the German propagandists in that region. We have practically joined hands with Russia in the preservation of our interests in Mesopotamia, and it is to the powerful influence of Russia that we should again

look for overawing the lawless tribes of Kurdistan, whenever the northern districts of Mesopotamia are restored to normal conditions of peace, and once again effect can be given to the great irrigation and drainage schemes which will revolutionize Mesopotamia in the happiest sense. Along the line of the Russo-Persian boundary as far east as Herat there is a situation which was full of interest before the War, which concerns us still, and which may be briefly described. Whilst public attention has been so largely concentrated on the ambitions of Germany and the factor in their realization which should be played by the railway connecting Constantinople with Bagdad and more remotely with Basra, Russian enterprise in the matter of railways in the East has been overlooked. And yet a momentous episode in the history of railways in the East has taken place with the first introduction of the railway to Persia. From the Black Sea to Tabriz there is now an open line, and it is a notable line for many reasons. Not only is it the first to penetrate the defences of oriental conservatism in Persia, but it is an extension of the gigantic Russian system destined to form the first link in the long chain of communication between Europe and India, and beyond India to the farthest East. From Julfa, where the boundary between Persia and Russia is crossed, it is less than a hundred miles to the markets of Tabriz, one of the most important commercial centres in Persia. But it is not for carpets and cotton and raisins that the line has been constructed through this somewhat difficult country, and we may be well assured that the extension for

some 350 miles to Tehran will be the natural sequence as soon indeed as Russia is freed from war and domestic troubles and can set her able staff of engineers to work. Meanwhile Tabriz will be brought into direct connection with the great agricultural districts which lie around Lake Urumia. The linking up of the line with Tiflis at once includes it as a part of the whole great Russian frontier railway system. Tehran, the capital of Persia, will thus ere long be placed in direct communication with Europe, and it follows that Russian influence will soon be paramount at that capital, and that from so important a centre it will spread throughout Northern Persia. We have nothing to fear from such a *dénouement*, for Russian trade has long ago captured the northern markets which lie at intervals along the southern borders of the Elburz mountains between Tehran and the river of Herat. It is in this direction primarily that we may expect the next great extension of Russian railway enterprise. It is not the only one, nor is it the chief, of the Trans-Persian routes which will ultimately lead to the development of that ancient kingdom, but it is the most obvious because of its strategic necessity, and it also undoubtedly promises to foster commercial interests along a most important trade highway. The military domination of Northern Persia would be incomplete without the support of a railway skirting the Elburz mountain system, which reaches from the south of the Caspian to the western borders of Afghanistan. It would follow the easy old trade route via Shahrud, Bujnurd, and Kuchán to Mashad, and thus develop the resources

of a most fruitful district, whilst, at the same time, it would set an end to the raiding proclivities of the Turkman horsemen, who still periodically descend from the mountains to harry the grass-lands of their southern borders. Eventually will follow the junction of Mashad with the Trans-Caspian system to the north, and an almost equally certain extension eastwards to the Russian frontier post of Kushk, eighty miles north of Herat. Whether it will ultimately reach the Oxus plains at Balkh and join up with that further branch of the Trans-Caspian system which is expected to link Bokhara with Termez on the Oxus. north of Balkh, is at present on the knees of the gods, but there is nothing to prevent it beyond the susceptibilities of the Afghans. Equally sure in the long future is the connection with India. The Herat to Kandahar route has often been discussed, and as often dismissed as being outside the category of immediate possibilities on account of the interposition of Afghan territory and the direct opposition of the Amir to railway construction in his country. On the other hand, there is no insuperable obstacle to a connection via Birjand and Seistan with Quetta along a line running west of the Helmund River, a line, too, which holds out good prospects of commercial advantages. This, however, is not the best of the splendid opportunities open to Russia for Persian development and connection with India from her point of vantage at Tehran. The line from Tehran to Mashad will probably take precedence of any other as a necessary strategic condition; but another most obvious opportunity to Russian enter-

prise is a railway southward from Tehran to Kashán and Isfahán, and thence through the great commercial centres of Yezd and Kirman to Baluchistan and India. Whoever holds this line controls the destinies of Persia, and it is for Persia herself to realize the enormous development of her revenues and the advantages of the through mail service from Europe to the East which would accrue from its construction. Russia's control of Northern Persia will be all for the benefit of the peoples who will come into direct contact with her methods of civilization. Russian goods will flood the markets and Russian traders will compete with Armenians and Persians in these busy marts; but the greatest and most lasting gain to Northern Persia will be security and peace. We need fear nothing from this acquisition of a new frontier by Russia, for it has long been her natural heritage from its geographical position. Here it is not the Elburz system (the primeval haunt of the robber) but the vast salt midland deserts which form the best natural south-west horizon to Russia's Trans-Caucasian provinces. The recognized claim of the mountain system to support the best natural boundary must here give way to that of the desert, for the reason that the mountains present no great difficulty to the crossing of Turkman robber hordes, whilst the Persian inhabitants of the cultivated foothills and plains on the south are wholly incapable of protecting themselves by making any use of the capabilities which all rugged mountain tracts afford for the construction of strong defensive positions.

CHAPTER X

THE FUTURE FRONTIERS OF TURKEY

I HAVE heard it said before the War, by a distinguished traveller who had been a resident in Turkey, that the Turk was the only real gentleman left on the continent of Europe. Since the War began much has been said and written about the "clean-fighting" Turk, his determined courage in action (especially in defensive action), his courtesy towards his enemy, and his generally sportsmanlike methods in the conduct of war. And many who have met him away from the battlefield within the limits of his own administrative province will admit that in the higher grades of his social life he can be a dignified, hospitable, and kindly individual, well educated yet without self-assertion, and in all outward respects wearing the social insignia which we connect with the word "gentleman." And yet, in writing this of the Turk, one is unhappily constrained to admit that it is but giving a real devil his due, for beneath these superficial attractions there undoubtedly lies the devil of lust and cruelty, the traditional oriental disregard of all the conventional requirements of humanity,

a systematic cold-blooded sacrifice to the god, of murder and destruction which has finally outclassed him from the ranks of civilized communities and decreed that, with "bag and baggage," he must leave Europe for good. It is perhaps as hopeless to expect that the Englishman can understand the psychology of the Turk as that the German can understand the Englishman. We cannot comprehend the mental attitude of the man who will weep for the loss of a friend and at the same time will tie up his wife in a sack and drop her into the Bosphorus if she is naughty, or regard with approbation the sacrifice of hundreds of thousands of human beings with all the accompaniment of horrible cruelty because he looks on them as an inferior race or hopeless infidels. It is the result of a religion which inculcates honesty, courage, courtesy, and hospitality, but which leaves out the saving grace of mercy. Undoubtedly the Turk should be compelled to seek in Asia an environment more in keeping with his undying orientalism. His survival in Europe can only lead to a recrudescence of trouble whenever Moslem and Christian interests may clash in the Near East. Fortunately for him he has still a wide area of Asiatic country from which to select a new habitat and a new seat of government, an area fully equal to his depleted numbers and his dignity, for the Ottoman Turk is no longer great in numbers, and he still holds on to the land of his origin.

The insignificant Turkish tribe, driven from the wilds of Central Asia by the Mongols in the early part of the thirteenth century and passing through

Persia, entered Armenia under the leadership of one Suliman Shah, and thereafter owed its gradual rise to power to a chapter of accidents which were duly utilized by Osman (grandson of Suliman Shah), whose military ability won for him the title of "Beg," together with the horsetail standard denoting princely rank, from the Seljuk Sultan of Konia. When the Seljuks were scattered by the Mongols in 1300, Osman succeeded in amalgamating the insignificant Turkish dynasties which established themselves on the ruins of the Seljuk kingdom, and placed his small principality (centred in Phrygia) at the head of a now powerful federation of Turkish tribes, who thereupon called themselves Osmanli—corrupted into Ottoman. Thus did a Turk adventurer, whose family hailed from Central Asia, lay the foundations of one of the greatest of world's empires under conditions not very dissimilar to those which governed the birth of the so-called "Mogul" dynasty in India—a dynasty founded by another, and even greater, Turk adventurer two centuries later. It is, perhaps, not remarkable that the Turkish officer of the administrative staff whom you may meet in the cities of Syria or Mesopotamia will speak of Central Asia as the true home of his race, maintaining that the Turki language of the Steppe Turkman is the classical language of his people, and that the vulgar tongue of Constantinople is no more than a corrupt cosmopolitan dialect. He has every reason to be proud of his mediæval progenitors so long as he deals with their love of culture and research, their knowledge of astronomy and gifts of literary expression, and

attention to the gentle art of poetry, although, at heart, he may be prouder still of their fierce uncompromising and sweeping conquests, which spared nothing of the horrors of war in their devastating course. The same characteristics which distinguish the Turk of to-day are to be found in the history of his race from the beginning. Even that remarkable record of a Turkish gentleman, the diary of the Emperor Baber, allows strange glimpses here and there of barbaric passion and determination, although its author stands for all time as the most princely figure in Indian history.

Great as may be the military genius of a past race of Turkish warriors, and magnificent as were their victories, it is certain that the Turk has never shown the greatness in administrative capacity that he has proved on the field of battle. Those who know him best and most intimately maintain that the Turk is incapable of governing a subject race. Sympathy with the national ideals and aspirations of an alien people is impossible to him at any time, or under any circumstances, owing to the narrow restrictions of the humanitarian outlook inculcated by the religion of Islam. An alien race, if it is a race of infidels, possesses no rights in this world and no hope for the next. If, as in the case of the Arab communities, there is a groundwork of common belief in religious essentials, there is still the hopeless antagonism between rivals for precedence in the Muhammadan world to be eradicated before a sound basis of peaceful assimilation can be found. Mahomet was an Arab of Western Arabia ; Othman was a

Turk of High Asia, and the Turks of High Asia are not so far removed from the Tartars and Mongols who destroyed the city of the Kalifs and devastated the fairest of Arabian provinces as not to find themselves "tarred with the same brush" in Arab estimation. The personal quality of sympathy many a noble Turk undoubtedly possesses, but the gift of capable administration appears to be totally wanting. Independently of this want of aptitude for assimilation induced by community of ideals and adoption of the social outlook of the subject race (a want which, it may be remarked, is not unknown in India), there is the easy slackness of orientalism pervading the whole system of Turkish administration which in itself tends to weaken, if not to demoralize, their form of alien government. We English may be rather proud than otherwise of the social gulf which exists between ourselves and our subject races in India. We may think, and not perhaps without some justification, that too close an intimacy between East and West results rather in the degeneration of the West than in the regeneration of the East; but that does not interfere with the wholesome vigour and straightness of thousands of provincial administrations, which, summed up together as a whole, amount to, perhaps, the greatest and the most successful example of an alien government that the world has ever seen. And if the white man finds that there can be no common plane of social intercourse between himself and the brown man which would not be to the last degree irksome to both, that does not prevent a wide and a most sincere

desire—a desire based on the principles of Christianity and fostered by Christian education—for the welfare of the whole great community of aliens committed to his charge. That is a view which the tenets of Islam do not appear to recognize. It is the darkest blot on a faith which we cannot deny has done great things towards bettering the conditions of human life in the world, and has produced some splendid examples of individual manhood and morality, but which never has and never can produce a sympathetic and successful ruler of subject races. The Turk in the heyday of his power in Europe perhaps approached nearer to a successful issue in his endeavours to rule conquered but still antagonistic peoples before the disease of oriental apathy and immorality had encompassed him; whilst the tonic effect of recent military activities was still comparatively fresh. There was much astuteness, if not something of liberality, in his selection of Christians to assist in working the machinery of Moslem administration. Undoubtedly he owed much to this capacity for conveniently ignoring creed where his own interests were so nearly concerned. With a Muhammadan military autocracy at the head of affairs in Constantinople, provincial government was often in the hands of Christians, who sometimes owed a grateful allegiance to their Turkish masters, and served them faithfully and well. The Corps of Janissaries, which more than once decided the fate of a dynasty, was originally recruited from the ranks of Christian children who were educated as soldiers and formed a sort of bodyguard of the Empire. The Corps of Janissaries

was destroyed by the Sultan Mahmúd in 1827 for the singular reason that they refused to take any part in a reorganization of the army which was demanded by the progress in military science of the day. Rather than join the remodelled regiments they raised the standard of rebellion. From that time the Empire of the Turk slid steadily on the down grade till, with the varying fortunes of nearly a century of wars, the political boundaries of Turkey were drawn as they now exist in the map of Europe.

The last great war in which Turkey was engaged is fresh in our memory. By good luck rather than good management or victorious fighting, Turkey found herself in a much stronger and more important position than at one time appeared likely to be the result of her conflict with Bulgaria. There was a time when it seemed probable that the Chatalja lines would limit her territory to the west of Constantinople, and it was only the collapse of Bulgaria before the Serbian and Greek allies that enabled her to reoccupy Adrianople (which city, by the way, was expressly excluded from her occupation by the British Government) and to extend her dominions to the Maritza River on the west, and to the mountain divide overlooking Adrianople on the north. Geographically it was not a bad boundary, but it had one great defect. It crossed the Maritza River at two points so as to include an area of some 700 square miles of territory, lying within the great bend of the river, within Turkish domination ; the object of this departure from the reasonably good natural boundary formed by that river being to safeguard

Adrianople, which is on the banks of the Maritza at the northern arm of the bend. This defect has, however, been removed since the present War commenced by the cession of this area to Bulgaria. The western boundary of Turkey in Europe is now the Maritza as far north as Mustapha Pasha, from which point it takes to the mountains, which carry it eastward to the Black Sea.

Adrianople, which was once the rival of Constantinople in the past as the seat of Ottoman government, is pleasantly situated on a hill, but is described as a filthy town of narrow, tortuous streets with but one decorative feature of importance—the mosque of Sultan Selim II., which is a splendid specimen of Turkish architecture. Adrianople is, however, an important trade centre for silk, cotton, linen, opium, and tapestry, and it is the capital of a province which is rich in agricultural produce. The basin of the Ergene Su, which flows westward from the mountains overlooking the Black Sea to the Maritza, comprises all the most promising and the best of the provincial territory, and it is by the valleys of the Maritza and the Ergene Su that the all-important railway line which connects Berlin with Constantinople and Bagdad is carried. Whoever holds the province of Adrianople absolutely commands that line, and its loss to the Turks would sever the most important link which the oriental Osmanli holds with the world of Western civilization. It being fully recognized that Armenian massacres, Syrian starvation, and a degraded government are in themselves sufficient to cry aloud for the deportation of the Turk

to some Asiatic region where "he can never again let loose his devilries on a too patient world" (without taking count of his treatment of British prisoners, until we know exactly what that treatment may have been), the question arises: "Who is to hold the province of Adrianople" and replace the Turk? Russia has declined all administrative responsibilities and has reversed what may be called her traditional policy as regards Constantinople. We cannot therefore look to Russia as a candidate for the government of Thrace. Bulgaria and Serbia are equally out of the question, so that it becomes one of the most serious problems of the Balkan settlement whether to hand over Thrace to Greece (who can claim the existence of important colonies on the Black Sea) in exchange for concessions elsewhere, and to make her the guardian of the approaches to an internationalized Constantinople, or to leave Turkey as much of Europe as she still possesses.

And as we review the Asiatic provinces of Turkey in succession we may very well ask: How many real Ottoman Turks are there to be provided for? The pre-war population of the Turkish Empire might perhaps be reckoned as about 20,000,000. It is improbable that any exact estimate exists, but 20,000,000 cannot be very far wrong. Of this 20,000,000 at least 8,000,000 (or nearly half) are Arabs, including Kurds; at least 2,000,000 (some authorities say 2,500,000) are Greeks; another 2,000,000 are Levantines, and there were about 2,000,000 Armenians before the phase of diabolical massacre set in. Some of the 6,000,000 Ottoman

Turks who make up the rest of the population are scattered far and wide in military centres and Asiatic administrative posts, but only so far as is necessary to secure the permanence of Turkish domination; the majority are to be found in the Anatolian province of Asia Minor, with about half a million in Constantinople. Armenians, Greeks, Jews, Levantines, and Europeans together outnumber the Turks in their own capital, where there is no one group with the power to guarantee a permanent Ottoman Government. Under such conditions it is clear that to shift Turkey definitely out of Europe is not such a drastic proceeding as might have been anticipated. It practically amounts to the removal of the governing powers (whatever those powers may be at the end of the War) from Constantinople to some position in Asia where they would be less capable of those oriental devilments which have rendered them impossible in Europe. There would not necessarily be any great emigration of the Turkish population. With his belief in "Kismet," the educated Turk of the town would accept the new position as the decree of Allah and probably stand by his European heritage. As for the uneducated Turk, the exigencies of the War must have so diminished his numbers that he would rapidly be submerged in the very mixed population around him and speedily become an unconsidered factor in the human element of what is now European Turkey. There would be no great disruption and very little "complaining in the streets," and the "sick man" would die an almost natural death.

Of the four outlying provinces of Asiatic Turkey,

three may be regarded as impossible asylums for the departing Government. Those three are Syria, the Hedjaz, and Mesopotamia. We may hope that the Turk will cease to reign in any of them. Syria must ever be associated in our minds with the Biblical history of Palestine. We cannot forget that for more than six centuries Nazareth and Calvary have been in the hands of an alien race professing a faith which is not only alien but which, after nearly twelve centuries of trial, has proved itself incapable of maintaining a decent adherence to the principles of humanity and civilization. Islam has finally proved a failure. Its prophets are discredited in the eyes of their own followers. Its administrative practice has sunk to the level of primeval barbarism. And if the same thing may be said of Christian Germany and of her military ethics, we can only reply that Germany has lost her hold on Christian principles through a determined striving after higher forms of Kultur and the philosophy of the superman ; not through the physical and moral decay of the nation. No Christian country ever appealed to Germany for guidance in Christian ethics or accepted the Kaiser as the head of the faith ! Should we win this War as we mean to win it, the Turk must depart from Jerusalem, and the supremacy of a Christian Government must be assured to Palestine.

Syria is, on the whole, a well-defined territory with strong natural boundaries : the sea to the west, a most pathless desert to the east and south, the Euphrates on the north-east, and only a comparatively small extent of ill-defined boundary to the

north. The key to Syrian control lies at Damascus, which commands the approaches to Egypt, to the Hedjaz, to the coast-line, and to Constantinople. Whoever holds Syria must hold Damascus, and his only concern will be to determine a strong natural northern boundary between the Euphrates and the head of the Gulf of Iskanderun. The problem does not appear to be a difficult one, the Cilician gates on the west and the point where the Bagdad railway crosses the Euphrates on the east being almost obligatory points on the frontier. It follows as a necessary corollary to the occupation of Syria that the Hedjaz would have to be abandoned by the Turk to its Arab conquerors, and that the thrice holy sanctuaries of Mecca and Medina would pass from his control along with Jerusalem. There is not much promise of future development in the Syrian area. Palestine is a poor and stony country for the most part, and its climate is unwholesome, but a simple scheme of irrigation in the Jordan valley would greatly improve the agricultural prospects of the south, and the command of the future railway to Egypt would undoubtedly bring in wealth from an increasing inundation of travellers. It would appear to be a foregone conclusion that when the Turk departs from Palestine the Frenchman (who already has railway interests in the country) will take his place.

Unlike Syria, Mesopotamia holds vast potentialities of future wealth. These fair prospects were but three or four short years ago within a measurable distance of German grasp. Germany had not stinted financial means for their development either on the

lines of railway construction or of irrigation, and she held in her hand an agreement in process of completion which would give her the right-of-way from Bagdad to Basra and Koweit on the Arabian shores of the Persian Gulf. Wheat and cotton, sugar-cane, maize, opium, and tobacco will all flourish in Mesopotamia, where are also extensive beds of bitumen and oil, with the promise of coal, sulphur, and iron near Bagdad. The splendid scheme for the revival of the agricultural wealth and strength of Mesopotamia originated by Sir William Willcocks is already well advanced, and it is unthinkable that such a restoration should be neglected or abandoned after the War. Turkish engineers and German finance were its support, but we may trust that other means, both financial and scientific, will be found for its full and final development. The future of Mesopotamia presents a knotty political problem. The inefficient administration of the Turk must surely disappear, but who and what is to take his place ? Geographically, Mesopotamia is but the northern fringe of Arabia. Ethnographically, it is absolutely Arabian, Arab tribes extending northward to the foothills of Asia Minor in the province of Diarbekir, and eastwards to the Persian border. To the west there opens out a great vista of Arabian deserts. It would seem appropriate that the city of the Kalifs should revert to the Arabs, but it must be under conditions which may serve to bind the interests of England to those of this widespread people, a people who once swayed an empire which reached to the remotest regions of the earth, and who are undoubtedly the greatest nation of the

past of all those whose history has never yet been adequately written. An Arab Government at Bagdad would have to be supported by a British force ; and the absolute control of the Bagdad-Basra railway must be in British hands as well as of that to Nasrie, as essential to the security of our interests in the country if those interests included the restoration of Mesopotamia to its former condition of wealth and prosperity. To any interference with Mesopotamian affairs in future there will be certain opposition. It will be pointed out that we were deliberately adding 600 to 700 miles of Persian frontier to our responsibilities, whilst we find that what we possess in India is quite sufficient to keep us busy ; also that the control of the railway would call for the occupation of Kut and of Amara and Nasrie, involving the disposal of troops which could ill be spared from India. This might be true at first, and for a time, but not necessarily for long. It must be remembered that frontier conditions in Mesopotamia are absolutely different from those of India. On the west there would practically be no frontier and nothing to fear ; on the east, where Arab and Persian meet, there is only some 300 miles of hilly boundary, where tribes of Arabic origin (chiefly Baktiaris) might presumably give trouble. These people have, however, always shown themselves to be friendly and hospitable to individual Englishmen, and should England prove herself capable of restoring "home rule" to the Arabs of Mesopotamia, her prestige and influence would be enormously increased on the Baktiari frontier. North of the Kermanshah (or Kanikin) positions we shall

have Russia shadowing the distance as far north as Ürumiah, and then westward along the parallel of 38° north lat. (the latitude of Tabriz), south of Lake Van to the Euphrates. This is the most probable position of Russia at the end of the War, and it is a position which leaves us much to think about. Russia will leave the Arab province of Diarbekir to Mesopotamia, and she will, we hope, continue to occupy that part of Asia Minor which includes Armenia as far west as Trebizond and Erzingan. So far as Mesopotamia is concerned, this position of Russia at once neutralizes all prospects of trouble with the Arabs of that part of the frontier. So long as we are friends with Russia, the Arab, with true oriental perception, will never start trouble in front with a possible enemy behind. But Russia's position in the Near East is too large a subject to enter into here, whilst we are concerned only with Mesopotamia. And here we may briefly add the testimony of many writers on the subject of the idiosyncrasies of its Arab population, which is to the effect that two traditional classes of Arabs, the agricultural and the nomad—Jacob and Esau—are to be treated on separate planes. The agricultural and the city dweller will be easily dealt with. The trouble will be with the nomad ; but the nomad will surely develop agricultural tendencies as the country develops the opportunity for agricultural activities.

We have then a prospect before us that Turkey will have to retire to the south-eastward from Constantinople ; to the northward from Syria and Mesopotamia ; to the westward from Armenia and

the new Russian frontier. This means that the Ottoman must return to the land of his earliest occupation after he left the steppes of Central Asia—*i.e.* to Anatolia.

Anatolia, fortunately for the Turk, is a fine country and amply wide enough for his needs. Anatolia geographically includes all Asia Minor to the west of the Armenian highlands, and can boast of more eccentricities of geographical structure and more highly diversified conditions of climate and population than any Balkan state. Here East and West do actually meet and have met through past centuries, during which Greeks and Levantines, Hebrews, Kurds, Turkmans, Mongols, and Caucasians have encountered the ancient Aramaean stock, partly retaining their nomadic habits, partly settling in fixed districts and establishing trade centres, but never amalgamating into tribal federations or adopting any form of assimilation. Thus Anatolia has divided automatically into countless communities, Moslem and Christian, each with its own separate political creed and economic interests. This heterogeneous admixture of peoples has known no other government than that of the Ottoman Turk, and it is doubtless owing to the impossibility of any political combination amongst them that the Turk (who represents a minority) has been able to govern them even by his own unsystematic methods. It is impossible to arrive at any satisfactory estimate of the strength of these communities. Of Moslems there may be about 7,000,000. Greeks (chiefly on the Black Sea coast) may number three-fourths of a million, Jews (mostly in Brusa or Smyrna)

may include, with gipsies, perhaps 150,000, and there were originally some 560,000 Armenians, who have probably disappeared totally. We may assume that Russia, now holding Trebizond and Erzerum,¹ will continue to occupy all the Armenian highlands. The Kurds left in Anatolia are to be found chiefly in the provinces of Angora and Sivas, where they are occupied in horse-breeding and still preserve nomadic habits. The Ottoman Turk was never predominant in the mixed population. He merely represents the governing race. If the unhappy Armenians are finally removed from his control so as to be no longer at his mercy, the Turk may continue to assert his supremacy amongst the other communities without any shock to civilization or humanity. Anatolia is quite wide enough to receive the Turks gathered from Europe and Arabia. They will represent but a small administrative crowd, for it is not to be expected that Turks who have secured an interest in the countries of their adoption will necessarily leave those interests to settle in a less attractive land like Anatolia. To the sensual and ease-loving Turk Anatolia can offer but little inducement as a land of permanent residence. The peninsula rises from the Levantine sea eastwards to the Armenian hills at an altitude ranging from 2000 to 4000 feet, with a long lateral central depression within which is the main divide parting the drainage of the Black Sea from that of Mesopotamia. It is fringed with lines of mountain ridge on the north, south, and west. These ridges are not unproductive, but they are not easily approached or crossed. •The

¹ Reoccupied by Turkey since this was written.

breaking down of the drainage from the central plateau outwards through gorges and deep-rifted valleys offers the only opportunity for road- or rail-making from the many indentations and harbours of the coast-line. The mountains facing the sea are usually forest-covered, and from the lowlands cultivation is carried up between the ribs of the mountains nearly to their summit. There has ever been a fair amount of cultivation near the coasts of the Black Sea and Ægean, but to the south the land is sterile and bare. The great central plateau—the uplands of Angora and Sivas—is a wheat-growing area, but the cultivation of goats (for the production of mohair) and the breeding of horses have done much to impair the natural growth of vegetation and devastate the forests. Snow falls during five months of the year, and it lies for three months in Sivas, whilst farther east the climate of the Armenian hills is described as that of Siberia. The Russians have been thus fighting under more or less familiar climatic conditions. On the low lands and in the deep valleys the climate is as poisonous as it usually proves to be under similar conditions in Asia. Apart from its magnificent natural beauties of landscape and effects of mountain scenery, Anatolia is not alluring. Here, indeed, may the Turk find a resting-place; it will surely be here that he will discover a new seat of government. The choice of cities for a capital seems small. The central position of Angora (which has its railway connection with Constantinople) or of Sivas (which has no such advantage) might at first sight appear to render either of them suitable for an administrative centre, but

their attractions must be completely outweighed by those of Brusa and Smyrna. Brusa, about thirty miles from the coast of the Sea of Marmora, is the centre of the silk industry, and is quite conveniently handy for a rapid shift of residence from Constantinople. Smyrna (chiefly renowned for dried figs and Turkey carpets) lies directly over a deep sea harbour and possesses inland communications which have placed her in the front rank of Turkish commercial cities. Smyrna is the city of next greatest consequence to Constantinople (if we ignore the peculiar status of Bagdad), and it is to Smyrna that one naturally turns whilst seeking on the map a new capital for an old and decrepit empire. One of the two, Brusa or Smyrna, is almost certain to be the choice of Turkey. The new Turkey should not require much boundary settlement. With the Black Sea, Dardanelles, Ægean, and Mediterranean on the north, west, and south, there is only the eastern border to determine. The critical part of it is the line from, say, the Cilician gates to the Euphrates at, or near, Jerablus, where the Bagdad line crosses the river. From there the western boundaries of the provinces of Diarbekir and Erzerum (which include Erzingan) reach northward to the southern boundary of the Trebizond province, crossing both the eastern and western main branches of the Euphrates, but not otherwise enclosing a weak frontier. How far the Trebizond provincial boundary will serve the Russian purpose it is impossible to say, for Trebizond is a long narrow province with a Black Sea littoral extending for some 350 miles westward from near Batum. The southern boundary is, on the

whole, well defined, being carried by a strong and rugged watershed. This great divide is, however, traversed by two considerable rivers which break through the mountains northward. The long arm of the province reaching out so far from the main western front would be a distinct invitation to trouble but for the strength of this divide, which practically runs parallel to the Black Sea coast at a distance of about thirty miles therefrom. The harbours and indentations of the coast which it covers are doubtless of considerable value to the local Black Sea trade, but none of them approach Trebizond as a port for trade to the interior of Asia Minor.

CHAPTER XI

SYRIA AND MESOPOTAMIA

No more important problem awaits the political settlements of the future than that which concerns Syria and Mesopotamia. Geographically both are but outlying provinces of Arabia, and both of them still retain a very large proportion of that Semitic element of population whose original home is Arabia. A wide expanse of Syrian desert separates Syria from Mesopotamia. South of this, where the immense peninsula of Arabia narrows somewhat between the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf, the well-populated oases of Shammar and of the Nefuds occupy the central uplands, and there follows southward a huge sea of desert sand which reaches nearly to the southern coast. These unexploited deserts of the south cover at least a third of the peninsula. Encircling all Arabia there exists a fringe of populated and productive country. All the western fringe, averaging about 200 miles in width, stretching along the Red Sea coast from Syria to Aden, and all the eastern fringe from Bagdad to a point about level with the Bahrein Islands in the Persian Gulf, was lately under

Turkish sovereignty ; only the Hadramaut shores on the south and Oman on the south-east being free. Communications across Arabia are difficult and rare. Between Bagdad and Damascus there is a well-defined postal road. Farther south the capital of Shammar, Hail, becomes the focus for desert routes from Syria, Mesopotamia, the Hedjaz (dominated by Mecca and Medina), and from Er Riad, the capital of Nejd (the highlands within the Nefuds), 250 miles from Hail to the south-east. Beyond Riad there is one known route south-westwards to Yemen and Aden, but the interior of the great sand wastes is practically unexplored, although it is known that pilgrims cross from east to west (from Muscat to Mecca) by a twenty-one days' route. The capital of Arabia, as recognized by Arabs, is Riad (alternating with Hail), in the red, sandy (but not desert) Nefuds. Riad is the home of the Wahabi, the most orthodox and fanatical of all Muhammadan tribes, the central focus of militant Islam. The Arab of Central Arabia remains the typical Arab who has preserved his ancient Semitic character through all the centuries. He is the Arab of the Patriarchs ; he is the descendant but little modified of the Arab of the Muhammadan Empire of the days when Arab ships sailed the Eastern seas and dominated them ; when Arab builders erected huge monuments in stone, as builders of cities and of magnificent works for the collecting and distribution of water in thirsty lands ; when the Arab alone could solve the mystery of the stars and possessed the secrets of alchemy. The Arab of the outlying provinces of the Arabian peninsula, of Yemen

and Hedjaz, of Syria and Mesopotamia, and even of Northern Africa, has never lost the physical characteristics of his race ; has never become cosmopolitan in social manners and ideals, and still preserves those Semitic idiosyncrasies, his dignity, his hospitality, and his aloofness, which we are rather apt to connect with the Jews alone amongst Semitic peoples. Taking them altogether within their widespread boundary of geographical Arabia, a more homogeneous nationality is not to be found elsewhere in the world ; and, if boundaries were to be chosen which should bind within one ring-fence one distinct ethnic community, there would be nothing for boundary makers to think about except a northern frontier to Syria and Mesopotamia. The Mediterranean, Egypt, the Red Sea, the Arabian Sea, the Persian Gulf, and Persia enclose Arabia within excellent frontiers which are chiefly of nature's own making. Where seas and oceans do not form the frontier, we have deserts and mountains. Egypt is definitely parted from Syria by a desert parting. Persia presents a broad phalanx of mountain ridges offering exceptional opportunity for a strong and efficient boundary. It is the north only, where we believe that the New Turkey is to be bound in to keep the peace in Asia Minor, that demands careful consideration.

Now here is a very curious political problem. Here is one great homogeneous nationality based on racial origin and immemorial racial proclivities already provided with the most efficient series of natural features to encompass it, which must, nevertheless, with the departure of Turkish domination, be split

into separate provincial entities, each under its own administration, and be so subdivided as to secure a prospect of peace between them. There are five such provincial territories. Syria and Mesopotamia are those with which we are more immediately concerned. Oman, with its important harbour at Muscat, from whence the approaches to the Persian Gulf can be safeguarded, is well placed to ensure its own integrity ; the Hedjaz and Central Arabia may be able to maintain distinct administrations amounting to separate governments without any interference from us, or any one else ; albeit the Hedjaz is not only a geographical extension of Syria southwards, but is linked up with it by the most important railway yet constructed in Arabia. Although the Hedjaz can never be a matter of political indifference to us owing to its geographical overlook of the Red Sea and its southern contiguity to Aden, it is in the last degree unlikely that any direct interference with the Home Rule Government which seems to be well established by the Malik ul Hedjaz, the Sharif of Mecca, will ever be suggested. We shall demand no more than the security of our small holding at Aden. If Arabia, as one homogeneous and consolidated nationality, such as it was in the days of the kalifs, were now to be accorded entire independence and left to rule itself once again as one great kingdom, it is difficult to say from what centre of administration the rule of the Government could radiate. The geographical centre is in the Nefuds, either at Nejed or, with little more facility for the arteries of communication, at Hail. But the difficulties of distance and

the unbridged spaces of almost trackless desert which spread around on nearly all sides would absolutely forbid the choice of a capital where the most fanatical and the least civilized of Arab tribes are still ruled in almost archaic simplicity. The earliest capital, since the days of Islam, was, naturally, the birthplace of the prophet—Medina—and it is here, in the country of the Koreish and in immediate command of the holy of holies, Mecca, that the Sharif (now the King) of the Hedjaz has established his court. The reason which led the Ommiad kalifs to seek another capital at Damascus are obvious enough ; Damascus, as the Arab Empire spread with the spread of Islam, was far more central and far better placed for gathering together the wealth extracted from the vast territories of Asia, where Arab cities innumerable sprang into existence connected by a network of routes along which can still be found traces of the busy traffic of perpetual caravans passing and repassing in numbers such as Asia has never seen since. But the glories of Damascus passed away in their turn, and the second of the Abbasid kalifs planted a new capital on the site of an old Assyrian town—Bagdad—500 miles east of Damascus by the direct desert route, and 550 by Palmyra and the Euphrates. The change of site was, doubtless, prompted by two main considerations—military and economic. The first was the gain of more immediate command of the Euphrates and Tigris routes northwards into Asia Minor, as well as that most ancient and most important road called the Median way, which connects Bagdad with Kermanshah and leads through Southern Persia

to the East. It was by this road from Damascus, passing through Bagdad and Makran, that India was invaded in the year A.D. 712, when a force of 6000 camel riders and 3000 infantry drawn from Syria and Irak, supported by a naval squadron, carrying catapults and ammunition by sea to the mouth of the Indus, and reinforced by levies in Makran, reduced the seaport of Debal and carried Arab arms triumphantly through the Indus valley to Kashmir. It was a notable invasion and a most successful one, pointing a moral for future history. Bagdad became a most important military centre as well as a home for literature, art, and mathematics. The other object to be gained by moving the capital was, doubtless, the immediate overlook of the vast extent of Mesopotamian agricultural wealth which had been promoted by one of the most perfect systems of irrigation then existing. Probably there was nothing like it between Mesopotamia and China. Damascus, on the other hand, overlooked (and still overlooks) a poor agricultural country in Syria, the command of the local ports and the Mediterranean trade being its chief claim to eminence. Had the railway been in existence in those days, bringing Damascus within a few days' journey of the great centres of religious pilgrimage in Mecca and Medina, it would have made all the difference; but Mecca was then as easily reached from Bagdad as from Damascus, and the two great, and ever divided, sects of Islam, the Arab Sunni and the Persian Shiah, could gather at Bagdad on the one great quest of salvation for their souls at the Mecca shrine. Thus

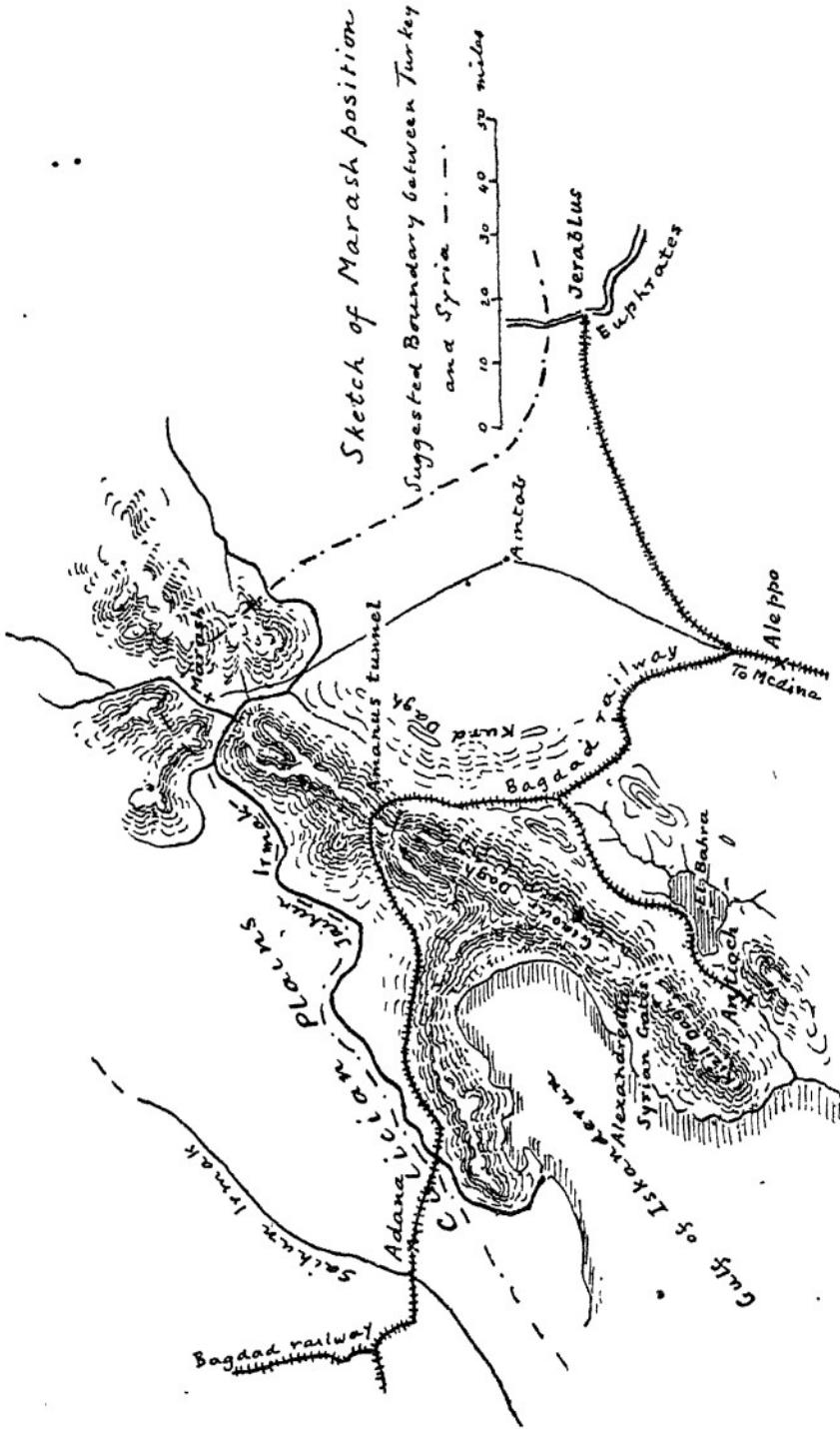
there is no difficulty in accounting for the rapid rise to a magnificent form of oriental existence in Bagdad. The soldier, the merchant, the religious fanatic, and the devotee of literature and art alike regarded it as the hub of the universe.

From none of these ancient capitals could Arabia be governed now. The Hedjaz will, doubtless, remain as aloof from European influences as is compatible with a continental railway, and will include all the coast mountain districts from the head of the Gulf of Akaba to Mecca, and from Mecca through the wild province of Asir and the lovely coffee-bearing hills of Yemen to the edge of our Aden field of occupation. Cut off by the broad desert from the turbulent central districts of the Nefuds, there is fair hope for the King of the Hedjaz that he may be able to preserve the integrity of his kingdom in peace. Syria, reaching northward from the head of Akabar, will be the Syria of old, with Damascus for its dominating centre. Who will reign over Syria and become custodian of the sacred places of Christianity ? This is yet on the knees of the gods, but the Syrian Arab will accept his fate under any European ruler with gratitude for delivery from the Turk. The interest of Syria to us is as old as Christianity, and as deep and lasting as our faith ; but the occupation of that country is also of great practical consequence, because Syria safeguards the landward gates of Egypt. The heights of Lebanon and the hills about Jerusalem will furnish outposts and watch-towers hereafter for the land of the Pharaohs. Syria and Mesopotamia geographically adjust themselves to a world-old

system of boundaries, which leaves little to adjust by their transference from Muhammadan to Christian rule. East and west of Syria are the deserts of Arabia and the waters of the Mediterranean. To the south there is little difficulty in drawing a line of partition from the Hedjaz at the head of the Akaba Gulf. On the north, where the connection lies with Asiatic Turkey, there are certain geographical features which have been closely associated with historical record since history began, and we have to deal with some of the oldest military problems of the world. From the Cilician plains of Asia Minor, east of Adana, the one historical approach to Syria is that which passes through the Cilician gates and then, skirting the narrow eastern shores of the Alexandretta bay, hedged in between the long Giaour spur of the Amanus and the sea, passes to Alexandretta, and from Alexandretta through the Syrian gates near the southern extremity of the ridge to Antioch. It is this formidable spur of the Amanus dominating the Bay of Alexandretta which forms the westward bulwark of Antioch and Aleppo. Another road to Antioch very closely hugs the eastern foothills of the Giaour Dagh, from Marash. Marash lies in the hollow of the mountains about 120 miles north of Antioch at an elevation of 1900 feet above the sea, and is on an affluent of the Jaihun Irmak, the river which finds a southern exit to the sea on the western shores of the gulf. From Marash there branches off another south-easterly road to Aintab (2750 feet) and Aleppo (1450 feet above sea). In spite of the fact that the affluent of the Jaihun, near which Marash is perched on the

mountain slopes, breaks right through the Amanus, there is no apparent connection between Marash and the Cilician plains, the only crossing of the Giaour Dagh being thirty miles to the south of Marash, by what is known as the Osmanic gate, or pass. Thus Marash becomes of some importance as a strategic outpost on the northern frontier of Syria. If a northern boundary is to be drawn from the Mediterranean to the Persian (or Russian) frontier defining the limits of Syria and Mesopotamia on the north, it must clearly cut the valleys of the Euphrates and the Tigris ; and the selection of points at which this crossing is to be effected becomes the chief objective. Fortunately, although the big rivers themselves are mountain born and take their rise in the far interior of Eastern Asia Minor, the affluents which feed them on this northern frontier, draining down from the foothills right and left, start in a fan-like formation as a multitude of comparatively small converging streams which leave a definite divide at their heads, and suggest a possible boundary parting with opportunities such as could hardly have been expected on a cross drainage line. Provisionally, the insignificant seaport of Karatash, near the Cilician gates, might be selected as the starting-point, and the very obvious divide of the rugged Giaour Dagh and its westward spur (embracing the Gulf of Alexandretta) could carry a boundary to the point where the affluent of the Jaihun breaks through the mountain ridges a little south of Marash. It would not be difficult to cross the gorge and to enclose Marash, making a fresh start from the great headland of the Enguzek

Dagh, which overlooks Marash from the north-east, and to pass by an apparently continuous mountain divide which would flank the road to Aintab and Aleppo to the bridge-head at Jerablus on the Euphrates, or to the point where the telegraph once crossed at Birijk, twenty miles to the north of Jerablus. From there may be found a remarkable divide curving northward and eastward, cutting off the heads of the Euphrates affluents which rise amongst the lower slopes of the spurs which form the border highlands between the mountains and the plains, safeguarding the great transverse road which runs from Birijk to Nisibin (but leaving Diarbekir to the north) till it cuts the Tigris at its bend near the meridian of 43° E. lat., where the provincial boundary of the Van villayet touches it on the south. Assuming (as we hope we may) that Russia retains her control of the Armenian highlands, she would, necessarily, occupy the villayets, or provinces, of Erzerum, Bitlis, and Van, the provincial boundary south of Van being apparently a well-defined watershed, running eastwards from the Tigris to the present Persian boundary at a point south-west of Lake Urumia. Both geographically and racially this appears to be a very desirable territorial partition between Russia and Anatolian Turkey and between Russia and Mesopotamia, represented by the provinces of Van and Mosul respectively. This leaves Mosul to Mesopotamia as its extreme northern province, a distribution which is not unsuitable as covering the Tigris valley communications with Bagdad. The eastern boundaries of Mesopotamia on the Persian frontier are already



demarcated, and they are doubtless quite appropriate from the geographical and national points of view. No frontier troubles, such as periodically arise on the Indian frontier, need be anticipated here, for the partition is between the nomadic Arab tribes of the Mesopotamian plains and certain independent and untrustworthy mountaineers (Kurds, Bakhtiaris, etc.) who fringe the eastern Mesopotamian plains, with Persia and Caucasian Russia beyond them. Under Turkish rule at Bagdad there is no record of their descending into the plains to make trouble with the elusive Arabs, but undoubtedly a rich and agriculturally well-developed Mesopotamia would afford much greater attraction. The safeguard from their attentions lies in the fact that they occupy a comparatively thin stretch of mountain country (very similar in topographical character to our Indian frontier), and are dominated from beyond these rugged hills (as they face Mesopotamia) by the superior force of Russia indirectly and of Persia directly. But local trouble with the Arabs themselves would almost certainly arise at first, as the wild, irregular, and truculent horsemen were gradually driven from their happy robbing grounds by the spread of cultivation. Eventually they would, doubtless, appreciate the sordid economic advantages of a settled habitat and the gains attendant on cultivation of the fruits of the soil. This, however, will take time, for the Arab scallywag of the deserts (which extend over two-thirds of Mesopotamia) who lives in the reed beds of the desiccated swamps in dry weather, and who rejoices exceedingly in a war which offers him brilliant

opportunities of loot from either friend or foe, and who is true Arab, *i.e.* true to his Semitic instincts; will not be easily reclaimed from his hereditary habits. The important question is : "Who is to reclaim him ?" Our general invitation in Bagdad, made after our occupation, to the Arab to come in and assist in his own home rule might be effective if there were any one chief of any one tribe who is in a position strong enough and dominant enough to respond. The Muntafik Arabs on the lower Euphrates are, perhaps, the strongest clan, but the effective strength of Muntafik administration would depend entirely on its power of combination with other tribes. No promise is held out of British support to an Arab government at Bagdad ; but we may take it that such support will be absolutely necessary for political reasons other than those of local administration, and that the anarchy and chaos which would result from too rapid a military retirement will be spared to a country which holds such rich and bright promises for the future, should it survive under conditions of government similar to those which have made Egypt what it is. The fulfilment of these promises obviously depends now on the position occupied by the British Government in relation to Mesopotamia after the War. The scheme of Mesopotamian reclamation extends from Feluja on the Euphrates and from Nineveh on the Tigris to Basra on the Persian Gulf. Due west from Bagdad our troops have occupied Feluja, which is situated about forty miles from the city, following the line of telegraph which passes just south of Lake Akkar Kuf. Here we are introduced

at once to the great scheme for the regeneration of Mesopotamia by irrigation which was initiated by Sir W. Willcocks. Here is the Feluja barrage, which, together with the upper Hindie barrage near Kerbela, is to regulate the water-supply of the Euphrates throughout the desolate regions between Bagdad and Kerbela and to the far plains of Babylon. Another barrage, or dam, is projected (but not, I think, yet under construction) on the Tigris below Samarra (where the Bagdad railway northward at present ends)—a restoration, in fact, of the ancient Nimrod's dam. These dams, with such ancient reservoirs for overflow as are represented by the Akkar Kuf depression and a vast basin west of Babylon, are the northern features of a magnificent scheme which is to bring life and agricultural wealth to all lower Mesopotamia. Projected by Willcocks, financed (partially, at least) by Germany, and carried out by Turkish engineers,¹ a very fine beginning has already been made towards the realization of a project which might ultimately rival that of the Nile, but which is, after all, only the revival of an ancient system. We have laid our hands on them now. They are inseparable from the responsibilities incurred by the occupation of Bagdad, nor can I see why English direction and Arab engineering should not finish what has been so well begun. I will not weary you with any repetition of the potential sources of wealth which lie in Mesopotamia. They have been summed up and tabulated so often, and on such excellent authority, that I feel that the last word has been said about

¹ The Hindie barrage was constructed by the firm of Sir John Jackson.

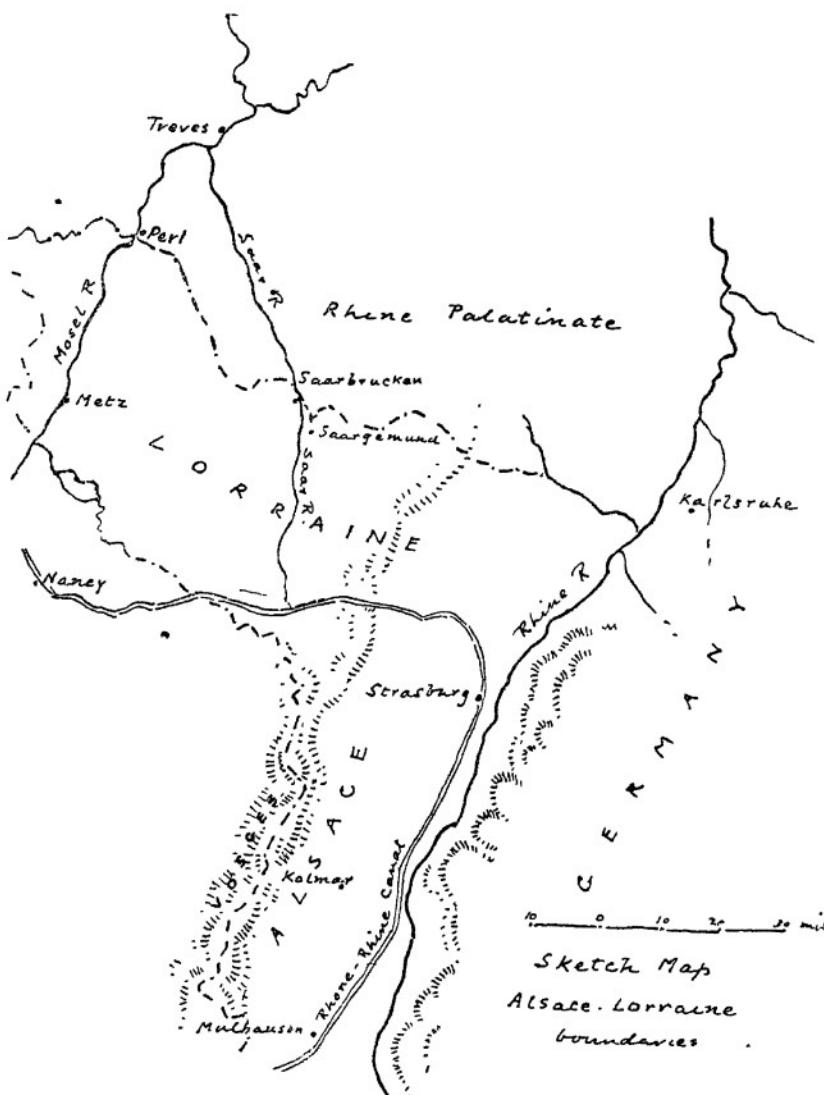
them. It is, however, not so often noted that the trade beyond Bagdad into Persia by the great trade centre of Kermanshah (now in Russian hands) was almost exclusively British before the War. But for the War we should probably have given all this away to Germany.

CHAPTER XII

ALSACE-LORRAINE

ALL France is unanimous in the demand for the return of these two provinces at the end of the War. The sentiment is national and universal, and the restoration of Alsace and Lorraine to French dominion is the one great criterion in the eyes of all good Frenchmen of a victorious conclusion to the present campaign ; and France has the sympathy of all her Allies in this demand. Volumes have been written about it ; historical records have been ransacked until it has become a matter of world-wide significance. Every aspect of the question has been set out before the public, excepting perhaps the one with which this booklet professes to deal, which is that of its geographical advantage or disadvantage to the framing of a strong French frontier. Here, unfortunately, the advantages are not quite so obvious as we should like them to be. There is nothing unknown or problematical about the geographical configurations which distinguish the frontier of Alsace, and the consideration of them in relation to their adaptation to defensive purposes is open to any one who can

read a map. It is a most important question, for Germany will still exist after the War, and a Germany which believes herself to be despoiled of her rightful property will surely lay up for future years a grievance to be exploited and a wrong to be righted when the good time shall come and the opportunity present itself. Consequently the effect of the transfer of the flat plains of Alsace to France with regard to her ability to defend her frontier from aggression is at least worth discussion. What would be the practical effect of an exchange of the Vosges Mountains for the Rhine River as the eastern boundary between France and Germany? Perhaps one of the important military lessons that this terrible War has emphasized (for we cannot say that the lesson was a new one) is the general weakness of river boundaries and the strength of defensive positions on lines of elevation. Like other generalities, it may have its exceptions, but it does not appear that in this particular case we can look for an exception. The Germans apparently did not regard it as an exception. The shortest and most direct line from Berlin to Paris lies through Belgium, and it was also obviously regarded by Germany as the line of least resistance. It was deemed better to tear up treaties and to annihilate Belgium than to tackle France on the Vosges frontiers of Alsace. With their immense powers of concentration and their dependence on the effects of the first shock of battle, animated by the principle of hitting first and hitting hard, the Germans massed their attacks on the north-east of France, because the Belgian frontiers were weak both towards Germany



and France, and the French frontier on the Vosges to the south was strong. Undoubtedly they chose what they knew to be the weakest line, and the check at Liége was unexpected. As the War has proceeded from phase to phase with its ghastly reiteration of the tale of terrific slaughter in attack, the power of defence has become more and more accentuated, until it seems not too much to claim that a well-selected defensive boundary based on a line of elevated command can in these days be rendered impregnable without any vast expenditure on permanent fortresses or similar defensive works. It is the command given by the elevated position which is the basis of strength. Rivers, on the other hand, unless bordered by broad bands of swamp and mud, have been of little use in delaying a determined and vigorous advance, not even when those rivers are of the width and swiftness of the Danube. The Rhine between France and Germany cannot be regarded as an exception to the rule for many reasons. It is broad and strong, but if we look at the map we shall see that it can be brought directly under the command of German guns throughout the length of it which borders Alsace. For a direct distance of about 100 miles between Basle and Karlsruhe the German frontier hills approach the right bank of the Rhine within distances averaging from three to six miles. On the French frontier the spurs of the Vosges flanking the flat plains of Alsace are never less than twelve miles from the river bank, and in the northern regions of the province they are very much more. To the north-west of Freiburg, near Breisach, an outlying extension of

the Baden Hills (the Kaiserstuhl) overlooks the crossing between Kolmar and Freiburg, nor is the Strasburg crossing to Kehl to be counted as beyond reach of German artillery posted on commanding positions. With the history of Liége, of Namur, and of Charleroi before us, even the historic fortress of Strasburg itself can no longer be regarded with confidence. The railway from Mulhausen to Strasburg is too close to the river to be secure from the direct effects of long-range guns, and, indeed, along the whole line of the Rhine frontier of Alsace the advantage in direct approach and attack would certainly be with Germany. From the military point of view the Rhine would form an unsatisfactory boundary to France. If we turn to Lorraine and the more general geographical aspect of the question, we note that, historically, the Meuse-Moselle plateau has ever been an effective barrier between east and west because of its general inaccessibility from the east, and also because of its wild, uncultivated, and forest-clad uplands. It has, indeed, proved almost as great a barrier to French expansion as to German aggression. There are also other characteristics which render this plateau a natural geographical between-land. The coral rag summits of the plateau form natural strategic points, which could be rendered doubly valuable by their inclusion in a defensive system of lines forming a really strong boundary to an effective frontier. The geographical position of Lorraine between two large river basins, *i.e.* that of South-West Germany and that of the Seine (where the chalk, clay, and marsh strata may be regarded as

the eastern edge of the latter or the western edge of the former), has, in the past, determined the independence of this province as a "transition" territory when it was the small buffer state of the Duchy of Lorraine. Within the present limits of this compact province no acceptable dividing-line can be suggested. Neither the northern nor the southern boundaries of Lorraine are free from points of weakness where they are maintained by the course of rivers, but the northern boundary from the Moselle to Saarbrucken and beyond Saarbrucken to the divide which links the Vosges system to that of the Hardt is at any rate as good as any that could be suggested, although doubtless capable of improvement here and there. The provincial boundary between Lorraine and Alsace is also sound (as far as the map can illustrate it), so that from the military and geographical point of view, as from all others dictated by reason and sentiment, Lorraine is an integral province of France, and no possible claim based on expediency can outweigh that of natural geographical relationship. It is unfortunate that the same strong argument for restitution cannot be advanced for Alsace, but it must at the same time be admitted that the geographical argument is not necessarily paramount. Most gladly would France welcome back her long-lost province of Alsace even with a weak eastern boundary, and most gladly would all well-wishers of France assist at the ceremony of restitution.

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